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**MANUALS OF CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY.**  
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*CATHOLIC MANUALS OF PHILOSOPHY.*

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GENERAL METAPHYSICS.

BY

JOHN RICKABY, S.J.

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LONDON:  
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1890.





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(I) THERE is in England a plain-spoken proverb which says, "Give a dog a bad name and hang him;" and there is, moreover, in England a bad name attaching to Metaphysics, with the result that our countrymen incline to treat that science after the manner in which they would treat the dog under a similar imputation. The ill-fame is in part due to ignorance, which not in every case produces the aggrandizing effect expressed by the words *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, but sometimes, as in the present instance, acts in the contrary way, and has the vilifying effect signified in the adage, "Ignorance is the mother of prejudice." Metaphysics are supposed by the ignorant to be essentially what many writers have made them to be by abuse—a wild dance of unintelligible speculations in the air. Again, there is a prejudice against them because no immediate results in pounds, shillings, and pence come of Metaphysics. Not only is it that a book

brings in no large returns  
 Hence itself contrasts un-  
 nches of physical science,  
 concerns material comforts,  
 in recent generations, to  
 a desirable place of habitation

as to be answered that Metaphysics  
 certainly need not extravagate into meaningless  
 jargon: for, dealing with notions that enter into  
 every sentence which we intelligibly utter, the science  
 is quite able to single out these fundamental ideas  
 and to explain their rational significance. Next, we  
 answer that, though Metaphysics do not serve the  
 uses that are not proper to their nature, yet they  
 do serve even nobler uses than those of material  
 comfort, and form in themselves a worthy end of  
 pursuit—not, of course, man's ultimate and adequate  
 end, but still a good end. It was the great work of  
 Socrates to go about questioning people as to what  
 they meant by the generalized terms in constant use  
 among them, and to show them that they needed to  
 make their notions much more precise; no one can  
 deny that this was a worthy occupation for the life  
 of a philosopher.

(2) From the student of General Metaphysics  
 no great genius is necessarily demanded, but only

that he should be a steady worker—one who thinks often and patiently, who takes pains to be clear to himself, and who does not rest till he has acquired an easy familiarity in dealing with the most abstract and most general of human conceptions. The meanings which he must affix to terms are substantially matters settled by the very nature of the case, yet not so that no room is left for free arrangement. When, however, a convention has been fixed upon, care should be taken not to forget the fact. To be thoroughly at home with the whole phraseology, both conventional and otherwise, as it is, one of the great difficulties of the study, so also is it one of the prime requisites. The bewilderment that disheartens the Metaphysician in his early struggles is comparable to that of a stranger in a house with many rooms, passages, and landings; to move about easily in such a place is a matter of habituation. Not sublime intellect, but repeated traversings of the several departments, with an attentive eye to notice their exact forms and their mutual bearings—these are the means to be employed. Think often, think clearly, think connectedly: here is the motto for a beginner in Metaphysics.

While insisting that a Metaphysician need not be a genius, but should be a patient, plodding thinker, who makes sure of each step as he proceeds,

we may add that not unfrequently mischief befalls genius misdirected where mediocrity would have been safe. Hume, Kant, and Reid have concurred in expressing the judgment that the creative imagination of the genius may be a great snare to him when he is dealing with philosophy; so that it is not enough to urge, in answer to the very severe condemnation of some systems, that their authors have been exceedingly clever men. All the worse that they were clever, if it was cleverness misapplied; many a work fails because "it is too clever by half."

(3) In appreciating the magnitude of the task before us, there are two opposite extremes to be avoided: one is to suppose that the notions with which we have to deal are so simple as to require no study, and that they can be confused only by a preposterous attempt to force them into a long scientific system, such as a text-book on Metaphysics displays; and the other is to imagine that the notions are so minute, so fluxional and evanescent, as to defy anything like fixity of signification. The fact is, the ideas are simple, and carry along with their simplicity some of its greatest difficulties. As a man may have "the faults of his virtues," so a study may have the difficulties of its easiness. Nor do Metaphysics stand alone in the enforcement

of the lesson that it is hard to be simple, that there is much art in simplicity.

As all the notions we have to deal with are so elementary, it will not be surprising that often in the explanation of them the larger part of the discourse goes to setting aside misconceptions, and that when these have been removed, comparatively little space is required for the statement of the true doctrine. The importance of the positive teaching must not be judged by the proportion of the words devoted to it, but rather by its own intrinsic merit. In the early days of French juries it is reported that the instruction had to be given to them, that they must weigh witnesses rather than count them ; and the same is true of the paragraphs in a book, especially if that book is about "First Philosophy," where most of the terms to be expounded are too simple to admit of definition, and most of the propositions to be defended are too self-evident to allow of demonstration by principles more fundamental than themselves. In these cases, to clear away false impressions is often the larger part of the task which lies before one who would carry home to his readers a conviction of the truth.



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# GENERAL METAPHYSICS.

## BOOK I.

### BEING, AND THE IDEAS MOST CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH BEING.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### NATURE AND NEED OF METAPHYSICS.

###### *Synopsis.*

- (1) The subject-matter of General Metaphysics or Ontology.
- (2) With the reality of this science, the other sciences stand or fall.
- (3) Moderation in a metaphysical treatise compatible with thoroughness.

(1) WHAT is the subject-matter of the science of General Metaphysics? Is it true that, according to the old sarcasm which is repeated with many variations, when Metaphysics is being discussed, teacher and learner can only put on a look of wisdom and pretend to a mutual understanding, but really have no precise idea what they would be at, with all their high-sounding phrases? There are, no doubt, some schools claiming the name of metaphysical that merit the contempt thus poured upon them:

but the fault is in their treatment of the subject, not in the subject itself, which admits of most accurate and intelligible statement.

To learn what the *metaphysical* is we must start with an explanation of the *physical*. By things *physical* are very commonly understood, though not universally, the material objects around us, which, appealing to the senses, form the first and proximately proportionate objects of human intelligence; and this, at present, shall be our sense of the term. Whatever was the original meaning of that other word *metaphysical*, Metaphysics as a science now implies a *passing beyond the physical*, which passage may be effected with different degrees of thoroughness. Even the physical sciences themselves so far transcend or overstep physical conditions, that they go beyond the individual differences between things, and formulate laws for a whole class at a time. This much generality every science must have according to the maxim, "There is no science of singulars." The mathematician advances a step further; out of all material properties he retains only one, that of quantity or extension.<sup>1</sup> In a well-developed language there are numerals which, in their present state, bear no noticeable reference to anything beyond abstract quantity; though in their original force they have appeared as largely "immersed in matter." We may contrast, for example, such concrete measures as a *nail*, *palm*, *hand*, *span*, *foot*, *cubit*, with the more abstract *metre* and its multiples;

<sup>1</sup> How quantity comes afterwards to be applied to things spiritual will appear in chapter iv.

or, better still, some Hindu symbols with our more perfect numerals. Mr. Tylor tells us that in the former the *sun* or the *moon* stands numerically for *one*; a pair of *eyes*, *wings*, or *jaws* for *two*; *fire*, with its supposed triplicity of qualities for *three*, and so forth. Similarly we find the ruder tongues, betraying their imperfect power of abstracting numerals from the matters numbered in such phrases as, "boy five-man," for "five boys;" "man five-fingers," for "five men." Now the process of abstraction once begun in Physics and in Mathematics, needs but to be continued and it carries us to Metaphysics. It was a remark made by Hegel, that the Pythagorean attempt to apprehend the universe as number, was the first step to Metaphysics. In this latter science we reach not merely pure extension as an idea, but leaving even this remnant of materiality behind us, we arrive at conceptions such as Being, Existence, Essence, Unity, Substance, Accident, Action, which may be applied either to matter or to spirit indifferently, for they contain no necessary reference to one order rather than to the other. Here in fact we have got a real Metaphysics, and indeed the most metaphysical part of Metaphysics, such as Kant and our English empirics have declared to be impossible. But *ab esse ad posse valet illatio*—"the inference from actual result to its possibility is valid."

The illustrations we have given belong to what is known under the name of *General* as distinguished from *Special* Metaphysics, the requirement for the former being that it should abstract from every

character which is peculiar either to spirit or to matter. In the strict sense it should be an *Ontology*, treating only of what is common to all Being; and if ever this rigour is relaxed, it must be understood to be a relaxation, such as occurs in certain sections that apply to all created Being, but not to the Uncreated. The various treatises of *Special Metaphysics* consider properties, some distinctly material, others distinctly spiritual; but they keep up the claim to their title of Metaphysics, because they go beyond Physics in the narrow meaning of the word. Practically Physics trespass on the metaphysical territory; but if they remained within their closest bounds, they would confine themselves to formulating the laws of sequence and co-existence among sense-phenomena without entering into the questions of substance, cause, and so forth. Very laudably physical treatises employ a little Metaphysics. Mathematics, also, we sometimes call metaphysical, not because they really soar beyond all that is sensible, but because the one sensible quality which they retain, is considered by them under a supersensible aspect, as the most abstract form of extension or quantity.

It would seem that Logic should come under *Special Metaphysics*; but because, while on the one hand Metaphysics deals with the real, Logic, on the other hand, is very largely concerned with what we shall soon have to speak about as "second intentions," for this reason, the logical is often contrasted with the metaphysical. For a different reason some would not rank Moral Science as a branch of *Special Metaphysics*. And yet the word metaphysical, if

applied to Logic and Morals, might retain the meaning we have attached to it; for these are engaged upon considerations beyond the physical or sensible order. It is merely one out of many instances, where a word successively widens and narrows its signification.

(2) After broadly characterizing the study of Metaphysics, we may now go further and contend, that not only has General Metaphysics a position by the side of the other sciences, but that no other science can be real if General Metaphysics is not so. For obviously if Being, Substance, Cause, and such like notions are unreal, then no concrete fact can be seized in its reality and put into a real science. We do not say that there exists any object which is simply Being, or Substance, or Cause in general; but we do say that if these general notions are invalid, no notion of the singular and concrete object can be valid, for with the general is indissolubly bound up the fate of the particular. Hence it is worth the while of those who indulge in a deal of cheap wit about the superior security of Physics over Metaphysics, to remember that the two causes are not opposite, nor even independent, but most strictly interconnected. No Physics without Metaphysics; no Metaphysics without at least a sufficient starting-ground in Physics. It follows that Metaphysics has, not only the other requirements of Comte for "positive" knowledge, namely "reality," "certainty," and "precision," but also "utility," if we raise the meaning of the term above its lower level of gross materialism.

And here Metaphysics has distinctly suffered from some metaphysicians—of course bad ones—who have broken up the essential union of things. They have spoken of “empty Being,” or more correctly, “Being in its most abstract form,” as though it had a sort of distinct existence from physical nature, or entered as a really distinct component into concrete objects. Hence the magnificent utterance—magnificent in its simplicity—“I am Who am,” has been taken to signify that the origin of all things should be regarded as a Being quite indeterminate to start with, having no attributes, no concrete essence, but a bare existence, which is the existence of nothing in particular. We, at any rate, disclaim all pretence to assert for every metaphysical abstraction of the mind a corresponding distinction in things themselves: we go on the principle that whether a mental distinction has its counterpart also in reality, is a point to be settled on the merits of each case in detail. We are satisfied if the character abstracted by the metaphysician is real, and we leave it to further investigation whether it is a reality complete in itself, or only one real character intrinsically bound up with other real characters, which together with it constitute a unity, not really divisible but only mentally distinguishable.<sup>2</sup> Thus we guarantee that objects are really Beings; we do not say that mere Being can be the whole of any reality, or even an actually distinct part.

<sup>2</sup> When we treat of distinction we will explain the doctrine here briefly indicated.

(3) Metaphysics, then, in the proper understanding of the term, we have pronounced to be an essential for the foundation of all real science. Whereupon we fancy that we hear the plaintive appeal, If Metaphysics we must have, of course we will submit; but at least let us have Metaphysics in moderation, by which we mean mainly two things: first, that only positive doctrine, not controverted opinions, be presented to us, and secondly, that the positive doctrine confine itself to substantials, without making excursions into the nooks and corners that skirt the way, simply for the sake of peering into curious recesses.

Replying to the latter demand first, we promise that we will try to keep chiefly to the principal terms, such as *Being*, *Essence*, *Existence*, *Substance*, *Cause*, and explain them; next, as to the avoidance of controversy, that cannot be wholly attained without most serious loss. The man who will not listen to the main difficulties against a true theory, often fails to acquire a spirit of due caution; he has no fear of committing himself, no sufficient sense of the need of qualifications in statements, no thoroughness such as the real student always wants, and distinctly misses where it is not present. When, however, it comes to the question, Which are the adverse views which it will be profitable to notice? opinions are sure to differ, if only because of the differences of interest that have been aroused. One man who sees no reason why Hegel should be mentioned, remembers sufficient of Mansel's lectures to feel a deficit when points raised by him are



passed over without notice. Another man declares that Mansel's day is over, and perhaps ought never to have been; but that Hegel is a living power in the country, and ought decidedly to be reckoned with. Thus what to one is a very interesting quotation, to another is a vexatious impertinence. Without any offence we may be permitted the two remarks, that professed moderation of appetite for variety in philosophical opinions, may easily be a cloak for sluggishness—a part of that shrinking from labour which is so common in intellectual undertakings; and next, that with an increasing breadth of knowledge there is an increasing need for yet wider information. The stream of Greek thought often flowed very clear and straight, but then it was, for the most part, a narrow stream; the current of modern thought, in its best examples, is also clear and makes straight for its purpose, but its broader expanse requires a greater range of vision in him who would watch its course, and a weak-eyed observer may easily fancy that it is but an aimless waste of waters. The honest critic will try to make sure that he is right, before he ventures to say that a complex line of discussion is wanting in closeness of reasoning.

In the effort to keep controversy within bounds we shall regard the aberrations of our native school of thought—the school of Hume—as calling for our most explicit notice; with some of its errors we must distinctly grapple. About Hegelianism we shall say less, but we cannot afford quite to ignore it, because it has a strong foothold in the Univer-

sities and in the recent edition of the *British Encyclopædia*; read, for instance, the article entitled, *Metaphysic*. Just because we are not going expressly to combat Hegel, at the several points where we come into conflict with his theories, it is fitting, at the outset, to declare our general mode of opposition to him, which is one for the most part of indirect encounter. The matter which we treat in Metaphysics he gives in what he calls Logic. For, declaring the Logical Idea to be the Unity and Totality of Things, or God, and identifying Thought and Thing, he has consequently no separate place for an Ontology as distinguished from Logic. Accordingly the three divisions of his Logic are, the *Doctrine of Being*, the *Doctrine of Essence*, the *Doctrine of the Notion*. If the theory of knowledge already defended in another volume of this Series, *First Principles*, is correct, then Hegelianism is radically wrong and needs no further confutation: the doctrine of Ideal Realism, which identifies the Real and the Ideal, falls to the ground. If, however, we must here give some explicit reason why we reject the Metaphysics of Hegel, we may put in the plea of a laudable "impenetrability to his ideas"—of an almost utter unsusceptibility; his doctrines "pass by as the idle wind which we regard not." For he fails in presenting for our acceptance propositions in themselves sufficiently intelligible to be assented to with an intellectual assent; he fails in giving us clear reasons why his several propositions should be accepted, even as mysteries beyond comprehension, yet credible on extrinsic grounds; he fails in the

very fact that he appeals to a *Reason* (*Vernunft*) which is above the plain *Understanding* (*Verstand*) and contrary to it. As to the last particular, we fully admit the limitations and the imperfections of the understanding; the many distinctions it has to make which are only mental and not real; its inversions of the order of nature in its own order of discovering the facts of nature; but our means of meeting these deficiencies is to recognize them and allow a proportionate discount for them, not to assume the existence of a higher function of mind, which shall set at defiance what are commonly regarded as essential laws of thought. We completely reject a Reason which contradicts the plain Understanding, and which, under pretence of supremacy over it, tries to impose upon us much unmeaning phraseology as though it were highest wisdom. Such is a brief statement of our case against Hegel on general grounds; in detail we shall occasionally make mention of his doctrines by way of specimen, or contrast, or suggestion.

We hope, therefore, on the plan laid down, to secure a certain degree of comprehensiveness in our treatment without passing the bounds of moderation; to present a course to our reader which will call for a steady effort of attention, but not for a strain that is excessive; to write something more than a compendium, or humdrum text-book, but not a disquisition painful in its minutiae.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NOTION OF BEING.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) In face of the very great confusion that prevails on the subject, it is needful to determine on some clear signification of the word Being.
- (2) A settlement of this meaning. (a) Being is whatever is capable of actual existence, whether it exist or not : *quod aptum est ad existendum* : it means an essence, a thing, a something, in the most abstract sense of the term. (b) This use of the word Being is partly a convention, but a legitimate convention. (c) Being, so understood, is always real ; and the understanding of this reality is important in view of various errors.
- (3) Being may be regarded as neither a generic, nor a universal notion.
- (4) Three first principles springing straight from the idea of Being.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(I) A WHOLE chapter devoted to the elucidation of so simple a notion as that of Being, must seem to some "Much Ado about Nothing," and quite enough at the opening of a book to condemn it of triviality. "Of Being," writes Mr. M'Cosh,<sup>1</sup> "very little can be said ; the mistake of metaphysicians lies in saying too much. They have made assertions which have, and can have, no meaning, and landed themselves in self-created mysteries, or in contra-

<sup>1</sup> *Intuitions of the Mind*, Pt. II. Bk. I. c. ii. s. ii. p. 161.

dictions. So little can be said of Being, not because of the complexity of the idea, but because of its simplicity. We can find nothing simpler into which to resolve it." On the other hand, there are writers who seem to suppose that Being is an idea too abstruse for human investigation: and we find both Voltaire and Goethe indulging in the thin witticism, that in regard to Being they understood about as much as their teachers, which was very little.

Not because a notion is simple is it therefore beyond the need of accurate determination by reflexion; and not because a notion is the most fundamental of all, is it, therefore, a mystery above our powers of research. Being calls for our investigation, to which call we are competent to respond, nor are we so contemptuous as to withhold the answer in disdain. Therefore, lest anybody should be inclined to persist in the opinion, that every one who has come to the use of reason must sufficiently understand what Being is, without going to Metaphysics; or in the opposite opinion that Being is a notion too subtle for human comprehension, we will set about the refutation first of the one error, and then of the other. A mere assertion may make little impression, but assertion backed by proof ought to leave its mark. We do not want the reader to fathom the meaning of all the passages we are about to cite; we only want him to gather from them a deep-felt conviction, that the term Being has been involved in sad confusion. The point can be established only in one way, and that

is by the quotation of instances, to which we at once proceed.

Sparing ourselves the relation of how Hegel manages to identify Being with not Being, we will begin with an author whom we have often to encounter in the course of this treatise. Hume<sup>2</sup> says, "Any idea we please to form is the idea of a Being, and the idea of a Being is any idea we please to form." This is very liberal; but others try to find an opposition between Being and some other term. One common antithesis is set up between Being and Thought, so that the former stands for every object of thought, or as it has been styled, *das reine Gegenüber*, mere "over-against-ness," or the *non-ego* as set over against the thinking *Ego*. Hereupon people begin to inquire whether the opposition is complete, or whether thought itself is not Being; and then, perhaps, they venture on the suggestion that the true antithesis to Being is, not thought, but non-entity or nothing. Meantime Being is not explained.

Another device is to regard Being as the same with actuality or existence. "Being," says Mill,<sup>3</sup> "is originally the present participle of a verb, which in one of its meanings is exactly equivalent to the verb *exists*, and therefore suitable even by its grammatical formation to be the concrete of the abstract *existence*. But this word, strange as the fact may appear, is still more completely spoiled

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. II. s. vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. iii. s. 2.

for the purpose which it seemed expressly made for than the word *thing*. Being is by custom exactly synonymous with *substance*, except that it is free from a slight taint of a second ambiguity, being applied impartially to matter and to mind, while *substance*, though originally and in strictness applicable to both, is apt to suggest in preference the idea of matter. Attributes are never called Beings, nor are feelings. A Being is that which excites feelings and possesses attributes." In another place<sup>4</sup> he surmises that a distinction which, in spite of many prior claimants,<sup>5</sup> he puts down to the credit of his father, will rid us of an ambiguity, while against certain philosophers whom he accuses of having brought about darkness where they professed to be shedding light, he has strong denunciations to make. "Many volumes might be filled with the frivolous speculations concerning the nature of Being (*τὸ ὄν, οὐσία, ens, entitas, essentia*, and the like), which have arisen from overlooking the double meaning of the word *to be*; from supposing that when it signifies to exist and when it signifies *to be some specified thing*, as to be a man, to be Socrates, to be seen or spoken of, or even to be a non-entity, it must still at bottom answer to the same idea, and that a meaning must be found for it that shall still suit all the cases."

Mill is not exactly leading us to a definite

<sup>4</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. iv. s. i.

<sup>5</sup> St. Thomas, *In Aristotelis Peri Herm*, Lib. II.; *In Sentent.* Lib. III. Dist. vi. quæst. ii. a. ii.; *Quodlib.* ix. a. iii. et xii. a. i.; *Sum.* i. q. iii. a. iv. ad 2.

settlement of terms, but he is showing us, and exemplifying in his own practice, the vagueness of usage. Let us take him up at the point where he declares, that "Being is suitable, even by its grammatical formation, to be the concrete of the abstract *existence*." Then, it means an existent thing, or an actual object; and what we want next to see is, how far Mill agrees with his friend, Mr. Bain, as to the meaning of Being as the same with *existence*.

Against Mill Mr. Bain contends,<sup>6</sup> that because ideas are knowable only in opposite pairs, and because there is no positive opposite to *existence*, but only the negation, *non-existence*, therefore there is no distinct and peculiar idea, *existence*. "The word *existence*, in its most abstract form, refers to a supposed something, attaching alike to the object and to the subject, over and above Quantity, and Succession, and Co-existence, which are the attributes common to both. The only meaning of the word is the object *together with* the subject, for which addition we also employ the synonymous words, Universe, Being, Absolute, Totality of Things. To predicate *existence* of matter or mind is a pure tautology. *Existence* means matter, or mind, or both, as the case may be. The only use of the word is to express Object or Subject indiscriminately, there being occasions when we do not need to specify either."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he continues, "from the predicate *existence* there springs no science or department of logical method. Indeed

<sup>6</sup> *Logic*, Vol. II. Bk. VI. c. iv. p. 390.



all propositions containing this predicate are more or less elliptical: when fully expressed they fall under co-existence or succession. When we say there *exists* a conspiracy for a particular purpose, we mean that at the present time a body of men have formed themselves into a society for a particular object; which is a complex affirmation, resolvable into propositions of co-existence and succession. The assertion that the dodo *does not exist*, points to the fact that this animal, once known in a certain place, has disappeared or become extinct, is no longer associated with the locality; all which may be better stated without the use of the verb *exist*." Instead of "Does ether exist?" Mr. Bain gives as the more correct form, "Are heat and light, and other radiant influences propagated by an ethereal medium diffused in space?"<sup>7</sup>

If, therefore, Being is taken to mean *existence*, Mr. Bain tells us that *existence* either has no meaning or it must be taken as synonymous with some other words less abstract in character. Mr. Spencer, while agreeing that we have no clear idea of abstract existence, yet contends that we have, in regard to it, an *obscure consciousness*. "We come face to face with the ultimate difficulty—how can there possibly be constituted a consciousness of the unformed and

<sup>7</sup> Kant too holds that Existence is no real predicate. (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Max Muller's translation, Vol. II. p. 516.) Dr. Martineau reckons it an "important fallacy" in Descartes, to have regarded "the existence of a thing as one of its attributes, and not as that which all the attributes presuppose."

the unlimited, when by its very nature consciousness is possible only under forms and limits? Such consciousness cannot be constituted by any single mental act, but is the product of many mental acts. In each concept there is an element which persists. It is alike impossible for this element to be absent from this consciousness and for it to be present in consciousness alone; either alternative involves unconsciousness, the one for want of substance, the other for want of form. But the persistence of this element under successive conditions *necessitates* a sense of it as distinguished from the conditions, and independent of them. This consciousness is not the abstract of any one group of thoughts. *That which is common to them all and cannot be got rid of is what we predicate by existence.*"<sup>8</sup>

In order that so prominent a body as the Kantians may not be robbed of due acknowledgment for the share they have had in making a regular puzzle of the term Being, we will quote a few words from the master himself. He speaks differently of *Thing* and of *Being*: for while he uses the latter for what is actual or existent, of the former he says:<sup>9</sup> "The one concept which *a priori* represents the empirical contents of phenomena is the concept of *Thing* in general; and the synthetical knowledge which we may have of a *Thing a priori* can give us nothing but the mere rule of synthesis to be applied to what perception may present to us *a posteriori*, but never an *a priori* intuition of a real

<sup>8</sup> *First Principles*, Pt. I. c. iv.

<sup>9</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*. Max Muller's Translation, p. 617.

object." That is, *Thing* is an *a priori*, subjective form of the mind in accordance with which, as a rule for our thought, we must think whenever we direct our minds to objects of experience; but we cannot assign to our notion *Thing* any corresponding reality beyond thought. So much for *Thing*: we append a sentence on *Being*, which has won for itself notoriety.<sup>10</sup> *Being* is not a real predication that can be added to a concept of a Thing. It is merely the admission of a Thing, and of certain determinations in it. . . . The real does not contain more than the possible: a hundred real dollars do not contain a penny more than a hundred possible dollars. The conceived hundred dollars do not in the least increase through their existence, which is to be outside the mind." Here it is plain that Kant, makes *Being* stand for Existence, and he distinguishes it from *Thing*, which he makes to be an *a priori* form. Our sense of *Being* will be found to make it synonymous with *Thing*.

Not much more need be done in the way of enforcing, by examples, the conviction that about the notion of *Being* men's ideas are unsettled; but two instances of a simpler order may usefully be added. First, Mr. Matthew Arnold, whose protest it was that he was no philosopher, took the etymological route to the discovery of what *Being* means; and he found contrary to what Cousin had imagined, that in different languages the verb *to be* had borne such original concrete meanings as *to breathe*, or *to grow*, or *to dwell*, or *to stand*. Thus he fancied that

<sup>10</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 515.

he had taken the mystery out of the word Being. Next, in behalf of the positivist religion, Mr. Frederick Harrison had to meet the assertion that collective humanity is not a Being, and therefore cannot become the object of a cult; he argued his case in the following dialogue, as P. against C.

P. "What do you understand by the word *Being*?"

C. "O, a palpable, living personality."

P. "Gently, do you mean that the Deity is palpable, or that an elephant is not a Being?"

C. "Well, then, a Being is a living organism."

P. "Quite so; and what constitutes an organism in the scientific sense?"

C. "O, pardon me; I make no pretensions to be a biologist. We are discussing religion, not Physics."

P. "In other words, when you reiterate that humanity is not a Being, you are not very clear what a Being is. Let us see what according to science really constitutes an *Organism or Being*."

• No doubt every organism is a Being; but we can hardly make a simple conversion of the proposition and say, Every Being is an organism. What seems to have been lurking in Mr. F. Harrison's mind was, that if he could prove that humanity formed one organic whole he would establish a right to call it a Being—a single Being; but with this truth he at least has put on all the appearances of mixing up something untrue and giving it explicit utterance, namely, that Being simply means organism, or is its convertible term.

We repeat that we do not wish the reader, at the present stage, to consider minutely what the foregoing quotations mean: their purpose is fully answered if they simply compel assent to the proposition, that Being is not a notion which everybody has clearly before his mind. We are going to claim rather close attention to a lengthened exposition of the sense which we are about to attach to Being; and in order that our claims might not be pooh-poohed on the score of needlessness, we have taken the rather painful course of inflicting on the reader a number of passages, which in themselves he is not likely to have found very entertaining. But the discipline was salutary, and let us hope that its purpose is gained. We now positively lay down our own account of Being.

(2) *a.* Being is either actual or possible; but we will begin with the former, because it pre-eminently is Being, and is called by the schoolmen, *ens participii*, Being as the participle. For the force of the present participle is to signify the actual exercise of that which the verb means. Thus *intelligere* means to *understand*, and the force of *intelligens*, as a participle, is such that *homo intelligens* must be taken to be "a man in the very act of using his intelligence:" whereas *homo intelligens*, when *intelligens* stands as a noun-adjective, is the same as our "intelligent man," who is so called, though at present he may be asleep, or narcotized, or under temporary insanity. Again, when we distinguish between an agent that is hereafter to do something and its future *agency* or *causality*, we evidently employ the

former term, not as a participle, *agens*, that which is in the process of acting, but as a noun, that thing which has a power to act, whether it be now using it or not.

Similarly, when we deal with Being, it might mean an actually existent thing; or it might mean simply whatever is capable of an existence, whatever presents an actualizable content, whatever is an *existible*; or lastly, it might mean existence in the abstract, as when we speak of the Being that is given to some possible essence. The second of these several meanings is found most eligible, when we want to assign Being its place as "the formal object" or special subject-matter of Ontology. Being, then, we do not define, for it is too simple a notion to admit of strict definition, but we explain it to mean whatever is apt to have existence, whether it have it or not. It is not distinctly actual Being, nor distinctly potential Being, but Being left neutral as to the assertion of actuality or potentiality. So when we say that fire explodes gunpowder, we are philosophically indifferent as to whether the occurrence is actually going on at the time of our speaking. Thus we disarm the criticism of two anti-scholastic writers, belonging to the renaissance period, Valla and Nizolius, who contend that *Res* "Thing," not *Ens* "Being," is the truly transcendental<sup>11</sup> term. With us *Being* and *Thing* are one: Being means something, somewhat, *Aliquid*, *Ein Etwas*, *Ein bestimmtes Ding*; it means an *existible*, that

<sup>11</sup> The word is explained later.

which presents a ground for actualization, whether as an individual object in itself, or as a part, or as a real aspect of some individual whole. Being so understood is called *Ens Essentiæ* in contrast to *Ens Existentiæ*; where essence is to be taken in its wider sense<sup>12</sup> for anything that has a *whatness* or *quiddity*, even though this be but of the *accidental* order as opposed to the *substantial*.

St. Thomas fully sanctions the use of the term Being in the signification which we have just attached to it; but of course it is not anything like his invariable interpretation. In some passages he distinguishes Being from Thing, because he is using the former professedly in its participial force, and therefore is obliged to make it convey the notion of actual existence. For example, "There is nothing affirmable of every Being (*ens*) except its essence (*essentia*): and the latter is signified by the word *thing* (*res*), which differs from *Being* (*ens*) in this, that *Being* is a term derived from the fact of existing (*ab actu essendi*), while *thing* expresses the essence or quiddity;"<sup>13</sup> or again, "that is called simply a *Thing* which has a definite, fixed nature (*habet esse ratum et fixum in natura*): but it is called *Being* so far as it has existence."<sup>14</sup> He refers the distinction to an Arabian philosopher:<sup>15</sup> "According to Avicenna the word *thing* (*res*) differs from *Being* (*ens*) in that the former expresses the quiddity or essence of *Being*." Again, on the

<sup>12</sup> See next chapter.      <sup>13</sup> *Quæst. Disp. de Veritat.* q. i. a. i.

<sup>14</sup> *Sentent.* Lib. II. Dist. xxxvii. q. i. a. i.

<sup>15</sup> *Quæst. Disp. de Veritat.* q. i. a. i.

same point he writes:<sup>16</sup> "While in an object we discover *quiddity* and *Being*, it is rather on the *Being* than on the *quiddity* that its truth is to be grounded." These passages suffice by way of acknowledgment that many places in St. Thomas are not to be read in the light of our present interpretation of Being, which is made simply with a view to settling the most convenient form for the primary idea in the science of Ontology. But now to prove that we have the Angelic Doctor on our side in the usage which we adopt, let the following words testify:<sup>17</sup> "It is true that Being (*Ens*) so far as it signifies that which is apt to exist (*secundum quod importat rem cui competit esse*) means the essence of the thing." Here is just what we want. Against our determination to allow Being to hold itself neutral as regards actual existence, it might be urged that some scholastics, of whose contention we shall say a little, but only a little, later on, strongly uphold a real distinction between essence and existence in created things. But that this view is not brought forward by them against our present position will appear from such a typical writer on their side as Cardinal Zigliara, whose words will serve as a brief recapitulation of all that we have been trying to make plain:<sup>18</sup> "Because Being is described in relation to existence, that is

<sup>16</sup> Lib. I. Dist. xix. q. v. a. i. Compare his reply *ad rum* where he says that "judgment" is about the *esse* of an object, while "apprehension" merely gives it *quiddity*.

<sup>17</sup> *Quodlibet*, ii. a. iii.

<sup>18</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. II. cap. i. art. i.



called real Being *which either has, or at least can have*, an existence in nature. In this way we assert that the world, man, God, are real Beings. Being is divided into actual and possible: it is actual if it *de facto* exist, possible if it is only *in potentia* as regard existence." It is an additional pleasure to find even an Hegelian conceding to us, that our use of the word Being is at least nearly in accordance with what men commonly understand in every-day speech. "In the ordinary application," says Mr. Wallace,<sup>19</sup> "Being is especially employed to denote the stage of *definite and limited* Being; what we call reality. Reality is determinateness as opposed to mere vagueness. To be real it is necessary to be a *somewhat*." Hence we are led to the most useful remark that, according to our account of it, Being is in one way a determinate idea; it has a fixed content, though this is the smallest possible. It contains only one note in its "comprehension," but it really does contain one. Therefore we say definitively Being means *Thing*. As to the logical "extension" of the term that is illimitably large, or, as we say, "transcendental," which means that instead of being confined to the bounds of one class, like mere universal terms, "man," "animal," "substance," it *passes over all bounds* and reaches to every member of every class and to every single thing. Philosophers have assigned various significations to "transcendental," but the above is our use of it in the present connexion.

(b) It may allay the rising discontent of some

<sup>19</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. cxxxv.

if we declare at once that the sense which we have just been assigning to the term Being is in part conventional. The fact that there is such a convention and something about its nature must now be made plain. No doubt there may be an inclination to refuse acquiescence in the arrangement because of a certain unwillingness to let the element of actual existence drop out of the explicit signification of Being, which in its primary force, as a participle of the substantive verb, asserts this very character of existence.<sup>20</sup> Still we have shown that herein Being has only shared the common fate of its kind. Just as a Protestant, in these days of easy tolerance, might pass all his days without ever actually protesting, and yet would have claim to his title because his position is one that might naturally lead to a protestation; so a Being may never actually be, and yet deserve its name, because it truly presents an actualizable nature. It so presents itself to thought, and thus the vulgarism *somethink* for *something* is not altogether a useless reminder of what many suppose to be a correct piece of etymology. They connect *thing* and *think* as *ding* and *denken*, or as *res* and *veri*; thing is thus a "thinkable content." But instead of further apologizing for those who are parties to the convention about Being, we must hasten to quote some documents in which they openly declare that the case is one for settlement by compact, not a matter that settles itself. It becomes a very hopeless controversy when

<sup>20</sup> In English there may sometimes be a dispute whether Being is a participle or a gerund: but *Ens* is clear.

rival disputants try to fix the signification of the terms by the sheer necessities of the words. Yet this is sometimes attempted. Suarez<sup>21</sup> puts the matter thus: "Being in its double acceptation does not stand for two divisions of a common concept, but for a greater and a less degree of abstraction in the formation of one idea. *Being as a noun* (*ens vi nominis*) signifies that which has a real essence, prescinding from the question of actual existence, not indeed so as to exclude or deny it, but simply abstracting from it: while *Being as a participle* (*ens vi participii*) signifies an actual Being as existent, and thus it considers Being in a more restricted sense. Accordingly Being, as a noun, does not mean potential Being (*ens in potentia*), inasmuch as the latter is privatively or negatively opposed to actual Being; but it means Being so far as it is a real<sup>22</sup> essence, a real something. Hence Being, as a noun, may be predicated of God, of whom we could never predicate potential Being." After Suarez two or three contemporary scholastics may be quoted to show how his opinion is still in vogue. A Louvain professor<sup>23</sup> speaks of the option that is given to us thus: "The act of Being may mean either *what* a thing is—its quiddity—or *that* a thing is—its existence." A like account is given by Father Palmieri,<sup>24</sup> where he teaches that "the proper object of Ontology is

<sup>21</sup> *Metaphys.* d. ii. sect. iv.

<sup>22</sup> Different senses of "real" will be given afterwards: here it means an essence that at least is capable of receiving an existence of its own, if it has not got it already.

<sup>23</sup> *Ontologie*, par A. D. Dupont, p. 35.      <sup>24</sup> *Ontologia*, cap. i. p. 271.

Being in the sense of essence, since Ontology considers the essences of things, prescinding from their actual existence." Essence is here employed in the broad sense of any *quiddity*, whether strictly an essence or only an accident, whether a concrete essence or only an essence generalized by abstraction; about all which matters we shall have to explain ourselves presently. *Essentia* as an abstract term means simply that which gives the *esse* of a thing, as *sapientia* gives the *sapere* of a wise man.

It is needless to add more witnesses about the fact of a convention, when that fact is not disputable; but a further remark made by the last-quoted author raises a question. Is it, after all, between two quite distinct significations of the word Being that we have to choose? Does *ens existentia*, Being the participle, really add a new note to *ens essentia*, Being the noun? Is existence wholly a different idea from essence? Father Palmieri<sup>25</sup> thinks that this cannot simply be affirmed; that at least to some degree the assertion would be incorrect; for, says he, "though the objective concept of Being is made to express both *essence and existence*, nevertheless it is not a compound notion, that is, not a notion such as can be split up into two elements, each conceivable apart. Essence and existence cannot be so resolved, because the existence signified by the Being is nothing more than the essence itself as actualized,<sup>26</sup> while on the other hand the notion of essence always involves

<sup>25</sup> L.c.

<sup>26</sup> This is a disputed point, on which a word will be said later.

that of existence, a possible existence implying the capability to exist.”<sup>27</sup> It may be objected that the implication of one term in others is so widespread, that if we are to refuse to admit plurality of ideas on this score, we shall bring down the number of distinct ideas to a very small figure. This is true: but at any rate a specially close implication of one in the other is found between the two transcendental terms, essence and existence, existence being understood of both the mental and the actual order. In this way it is taken by Father Tongiorgi: “Whatever is conceived as having some reality (an essence) is conceived as either actually existing, or at least after the manner of something existing, for it is such that there is no repugnance in its existence. Nay, more, by the very fact of its being an object of thought, it has a sort of existence in the ideal order.” So far from being a subtlety peculiar to scholasticism the above view is frequently expressed by authors of various schools, and even finds a place in the writings of a man so little scholastic as David Hume.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. I. cap. i. art. i.

<sup>28</sup> Hume says: “There is no idea that is not conceived as existent.” (*Treatise*, Pt. I. Bk. II. s. vi.) Similarly Locke: “Existence and unity are two ideas that are suggested to the understanding by every object without and by every idea within. When ideas are in our mind we consider them as being *actually* there.” (Bk. II. c. vii. s. 7.) The partially Hegelian author, Mr. F. Bradley, writes: “Whenever we predicate we predicate about something which exists beyond the judgment, and which, of whatever kind it may be, is real either inside of our heads or outside of them. And thus it always stands for exists.” Mr. McCosh says: “In all knowledge we know what we know as *having existence, which is Being*.” In the Hamiltonian school

Of course there is a school-boy desire, not confined to school-boys, to have nothing introduced into the teaching which at all complicates matters; and to minds thus disposed the passages just quoted will prove exasperating. But in study, as in many other things, our wisdom is not to yield to exasperation which is fatal to success, but patiently to grapple with a difficulty, and make, if possible, some tolerable compromise where perfect arrangement is impossible. There is a good suggestion in that title to a chapter in *Gil Blas*: *De ce que fait Gil Blas ne pouvant faire mieux*—"What Gil Blas did when he could do nothing better." Now to fix upon a signification for Being as the subject-matter of Ontology is clearly in part a question of convention. And because of the extreme slipperiness of the terms, no convention will be absolutely as neat as we could desire; no convention will be even maintainable unless we are aware of the ambiguities which it has to provide for; and therefore in arranging the terms of a settlement we must direct attention to a difference, and yet a sort of identity there is between essence and existence, especially when both are taken as well in the possible as in the actual order. Besides what has already been

Prof. Veitch says: "Whatsoever is thought is thought under the attribute of existence." Finally a Louvain professor, Dr. Dupont tells us: "Being signifies (a) what exists, (b) what has some reality. The two meanings though distinct are inseparable. For nothing can exist without having a determinate reality, and we cannot conceive any essence which does not appertain to some existent Being, whether in the order of facts or in the order of mental conceptions. In thinking of a possible essence we think of it as it would be if it existed." (*Ontologie*, p. 35.)

pointed out, Father Palmieri calls notice to a yet further complication, by mentioning the fact that existence itself can be regarded as a kind of an object, a thing, an essence: "Ontology considers the essences of things, abstracting from their actual existence: so much so that when it comes to treat of existence, it regards this not as bare existence, but *as being itself something either actual or potential.*"<sup>29</sup> In face of all these sources of perplexity we must resolutely state our free determination to make words have a certain force and no more. However, the two terms may pass over into one another, we can find a point of distinction between *that which* does or may exist, and the *existence* which does or may belong to it, or to which it does or may belong; for perhaps, at a stretch, we can view this matter of belonging either way.<sup>30</sup> As a bargain, we undertake to mean by Being *that which* does or may exist, whether it exist or not; we commit ourselves neither to its actuality nor to its potentiality. When we want to say something about existence considered as actual or potential, and about its relation to *that which* does or may exist, we shall be at liberty to do so; but meanwhile Being for us is any *existible*—whatever is capable of an

<sup>29</sup> L.c.

<sup>30</sup> Our way of settling the oft-disputed point whether *existence* can be treated as a real attribute, is straightway to make it one. "Of the Eiffel Tower, I predicate that it really exists." All the same it is quite a peculiar attribute, and an attribute in the wider sense of the term. For strictly attribute is used by the scholastics to signify something over and above what is essential to the subject.

actual existence. One reason why some treatises on Ontology are perplexing, is that no single account of Being is made, as we are now making it, the basis of the system, but varieties of meaning are allowed to creep in, and what is said of one of these is apt to be read on the supposition that it is another meaning which is intended. We shall see presently that the principle of Excluded Middle has to be interpreted differently when it is of *ens existentia*, and when it is of *ens essentia* that we say: *Quodvis aut est aut non est*, "Everything either is or is not;" and this example is only one among many in which it is needful to know exactly how *ens* is being considered.

(c) But it may be asked, if *Ens Essentia*, or Being when it is not positively understood to be actual, forms the subject-matter of Ontology, is not the Reality of the Science in jeopardy? No, for first of all we have not made Being quite an empty notion: we have not taken away from it, as some have done, just the one bit of content, or as logicians say, of "comprehension," which is proper to it, and without which it is left utterly vacuous, and therefore most certainly unreal. Mansel<sup>31</sup> is an offender at this point. "In the act of conception," he says, "when we regard some attributes as constituting an object, we conceive it as thereby limited, as being itself and nothing else. The indefinite ideas, therefore, *Thing*, *Object*, *Being*, are not concepts, because they contain no distinctive attributes, and the general object denoted by such a term is inconceivable."

<sup>31</sup> *Prolegom. Logica*, c. vi. p. 181.



As far as one requisite is concerned, we have secured that Being shall be "real:" for we have provided that it shall contain one note in its "comprehension." But that one note is "Thing," whether possible or actual: and the question arises, how can the "real" fail to include positively within its idea the actual? How can it leave actuality neutral? We reply, in one acceptation of the word, "real" is identical with actual, but in our present use of it we regard reality as sufficiently provided for, in that things possible are such that they *may hereafter exist* and *do now exist* virtually in their causes. They are not *mere* creatures of the mind, nor are they creatures of the mind to the extent of *second intentions*, a phrase which needs explanation. In the most rigorous use of the words, they mean something, which, *as it is regarded at a given time*, is so conceived that it could not, under the *present denomination*, exist outside the mind. An object literally and "in first intention," is, or may be, a *man* or an *animal*, *useful* or *noxious*: but to be a *subject* or a *predicate*, to be *one and the same in many separate individuals*, to be a *species* or a *genus*, to be *known*, these are characters which cannot be attributed to anything, except in so far as it is affected by the fact of becoming an object of thought: no actually existent thing, *as such*, is *subject* or *predicate*, or a *universal*, or a *species*. When, however, it is said that "second intentions" can exist only as objects of thought, it must be observed that *thought itself* has an existence other than as an *object of thought*; it is a psychological activity of the mind,

the *thought* as distinguished from its *object*, and so far it is of "first intention." Now a possible Being, though it can be looked upon from the point of view of "a second intention," must be admitted to be of "first intention," inasmuch as it is an *object producible by creative or by physical causality*.<sup>32</sup> It has an extra-mental existence in its causes or its materials: it is possible as a fact in the concrete, and not merely as an object of thought, though of course this fact cannot be known without a mind knowing it. Its reality lies in the fact that it is realizable by forces, and sometimes also by materials, that are at present actual, and have their power of production, whether we think about it or not. Thus the unreal is reduced either to what is intrinsically impossible, or else to "second intentions,"<sup>33</sup> which have indeed a foundation in things actual, but can never be simply actual things, existing outside the mind. For example, there can be no "human species," physically existing as a species, but there are human beings who can mentally be represented under the form of a species by abstraction from all but specific characters.<sup>34</sup> We conclude, that in the sense assigned, the Being that Ontology deals with, at least primarily, is real, but it may be either actual or potential.

Even yet we have not quite finished with the

<sup>32</sup> Not in Reid's sense of "physical cause," but in the sense of causality that has an actual influence in producing an effect.

<sup>33</sup> The phrase "second intention" has various other uses, and is often left in the vague. See Whately's *Logic*, Bk. III. § 10; Mansel's *Aldrich*, cap. i. § 8; St. Thomas, in *Lib. IV. Metaphys.* sect. i.; Silvester Maurus, *Quæst. Philosoph. Log.* q. xlii.

<sup>34</sup> *First Principles*, Pt. II. c. iii. nn. 5, 6.

description of the reality which is attributable to Being. We have seen that it has one note, and that this note points to a real object; but we have yet to declare that the reality of Being is not something actually distinct from the concrete natures of which it is predicated, and that still less is the Being of all things one and the same throughout. We can suppose nothing to be real with a Being other than itself; neither can we suppose that there are any mere phenomena, or any phenomena which are unreal. Every genuine manifestation is a real manifestation, and is declarative of some real object manifested. Being, then, stands apart by itself only as a result of mental abstraction, not as a fact in the constitution of things. Again, as to the other point, the singleness of Being throughout all existences, that likewise is a doctrine quite abhorrent to our principles, though only too congenial to some schools of speculation. Its prevalence among the ancient Hindus, who were so apt to regard all sensible, perceptible nature as empty appearances, is ascribed by Cousin to their want of history, which gives dignity to passing events, to their very poor estimate of human kind, and to their stern theocracy which pushed to extremes the teaching that God is all-in-all. We have not here to refute any of their errors; but the absence of such errors from any system of ours is what we do well to insist upon.

At length we have completed the sketch of our teaching on the subject of the Reality of Being; and the width of meaning which we have assigned to the term "real" will be found highly convenient

on various occasions. For instance, it keeps away from us the difficulty which some feel about universal propositions of the categorical kind. They can allow that where the "all" can be definitely enumerated, as when we say, "All the European sovereigns desire peace," the assertion is categorical:<sup>35</sup> but they feel driven to give a hypothetical character to such cases as, "All triangles have the sum of their angles equal to two right angles;" "All men are naturally mortal." Here, because the "all" cannot have its constituent members counted or found in the order of existences, certain philosophers interpret the enunciations thus: "If there is a triangle, the sum of its angles will equal two right angles;" "if there is a man, he will be naturally mortal." We, on the contrary, who make reality neutral to actual or possible existence, and to existence past, present, or future, have no need to introduce any hypotheses. Other conveniences will be felt in the course of our treatise; to call special attention to them at the time will not be necessary, nor does it sound well to be always advertising one's wares, and pointing out how admirably they serve their purpose.

(3) Occasionally we find Being called the *highest genus*, but according to the schoolmen it is not a genus at all. It is true that Cajetan and Scotus do not quite agree with the more ordinary account of how it is that the generalized notion Being is reduced, by the appendage to it of particular marks, to the idea of determinate Being; but the doctrine of

<sup>35</sup> There is a mode of subtilizing which disputes even this: but we are not concerned with it.

Aristotle<sup>36</sup> is against calling this particularization a descent from genus to species. Commenting on the subject, St. Thomas says:<sup>37</sup> "The philosopher shows that Being cannot stand as a genus; for a genus *has differences which are outside its own essence*: but no difference can be found outside Being, for not-Being does not constitute a difference." The argument is that a genus must be narrowed down to a species by some idea, such that neither of the two ideas contains the other as its intrinsic and formal constituent. Thus let us suppose, without dispute as to facts, and simply by way of illustration, that the generic term *animal* means a sensitive organism, and that the specific term *rational* means a spiritual intelligence acting, not on intuition alone, but by ratiocination—by "discourse of reason." It is clear that the generic notion here does not include the specific in its "comprehension," for there may be animals that are not rational. And, on the other hand, "rational" does not explicitly contain within its "comprehension" the meaning of "animal." For though it may perhaps be that rationality, as above defined, can go only with animality, still, "using discourse of reason" makes no open mention of "having a sensitive organism."

Unfortunately for the simplicity of our procedure, the scholastics are not clear beyond confusion in working out the idea of Aristotle. St. Thomas argues from the point of view that "no difference can be

<sup>36</sup> *Metaphysics*, iii. 3.

<sup>37</sup> *Sum. Pt. I. q. iii. a. v.* Cf. *Quæst. de Veritat. i. a. i.* "Substance adds no difference over and above Being."

found outside being ;” Carleton says that the differences of Being are outside Being ; Father Lahousse<sup>38</sup> repeats the doctrine, making the obvious distinction between “comprehension” and “extension.” His view is, that while the differences of Being include Being in their “comprehension,” but not in their “extension,” Being, on the contrary, includes its differences in “extension” but not in “comprehension.” In other words, while you can say that *substance, spirit, matter*, have *Being* as one note within the compass of their meaning, you cannot say that Being, as such, is *substance*, or *spirit*, or *matter*, because Being, as such, need not be any particular one of these ; on the other hand, *Substance*, or *Spirit*, or *Matter* is *Being*, but Being does not contain within its meaning *Substance*, or *Spirit*, or *Matter*. Now this last part of the assertion, that Being does not contain within its “comprehension” *Substance*, or *Spirit*, or *Matter*, is obvious if we take the term in its clear explicit meaning ; but if we consider its obscure, implicit meaning, then it almost seems as though some authors supposed a sort of inclusion in Being of any difference applicable to it in any particular case. This fact will come out more luminously when, as we shall immediately proceed to do, we take up the subject of the analogousness of Being : at present a single specimen of the style of treatment to which we refer will suffice. It is found in the words of Father Palmieri :<sup>39</sup> “ The real modes of Being are Being itself, so that in those objects which are ranked under the head of Being, *there is no note*

<sup>38</sup> *Ontologia*, pp. 290, seq.<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 273.

*other than that of Being*, but only Being in some particular mode of its existence." But, of course, he may explain, that it is the differences which "comprehend" Being, and not *vice versa*.

The question may seem a subtle one, but it is not really difficult. Some authors want to show cause why they should not regard Being as they regard an ordinary generic notion. They appeal to the fact, that whatever other case be brought forward as parallel to Being and its convertible terms, will be found, on examination, to be not quite parallel. Thus the disparity appears if we compare Being to that which comes nearest to it, namely, one of the highest genera, *Substance*.<sup>40</sup> Comparing the phrases, "Animal Being," "Rational Being," with "Animal Substance," "Rational Substance," we observe that Being, in its abstract form, can be predicated of the abstract forms which are derivable from its differentiating adjectives, while substance, in its abstract form, cannot so well be predicated of the abstract forms which are derivable from its differentiating adjectives. We may say, "Animality is Entity," "Rationality is Entity," more conveniently than we can say, "Animality is Substantiality," "Rationality is Substantiality." The discrimination becomes more obvious when we take something less universal than a highest genus. Starting from "Rational Being," and "Rational Animal," we may write, "Rationality is Being," but not "Rationality is Animality." The root of the doctrine lies in the more usual teaching of the scholastics, against Cajetan and Scotus, to

<sup>40</sup> Fonseca, *Comment. de Aristot. Metaphys. Lib. III. c. iii.*

the effect that the unlimited generality of Being is contracted to successively narrower and narrower spheres, not by the addition of ideas other than that of Being—not as “animal” is contracted by the addition of “rational”—but by a fuller expression of the same idea.

We are at once launched on that difficult sea of controversy which rages about the analogousness of Being—of Being, let us remember, taken as *ens essentiæ*. What analogy means is illustrated by the remark of Sydney Smith, which puzzled a very matter-of-fact Scotchman—the remark, namely, that a certain book was *healthy*. Clear, however, as this illustration may be, it leaves us under need of further explanation, which we enter upon with the observation that an object, an idea, and a word, as a matter of usage, may each be called by the epithet *univocal*. Most appropriately objects would be denominated by this epithet, for it is to objects that words (*voces*) are primarily applied: but ideas and words have established for themselves a share in the title. A *univocal* term, strictly so called, must apply to several objects the same notion, without variation of meaning; a condition of things which can be attained only by mentally prescindjng from all differences in the objects. Thus if by “animal” we agree to mean absolutely no more than “sensitively-organized Being,” in complete disregard of variations in the perfection of the organism or the sensitiveness, and if by “rational” we agree to mean absolutely no more than “intelligence that works discursively,” then these terms, because we have effectively willed



to make them so, are each *univocal* when applied to their respective objects. The only dispute that could arise on the point, would be a biological or a psychological one—whether our definitions are valid. But supposing their validity, then we have, at least under an hypothesis, instances of what is meant by *univocal*. We have one term applied to a plurality of objects without change of signification. Thus it appears that the power of making *univocal* terms depends on the power of prescinding from all the differences that exist between a multiplicity of similar things, and of regarding them only so far as they are alike. If, therefore, Being is of such a peculiar character that we cannot perfectly prescind, or prefer not fully to prescind, from its differences, then the term becomes, instead of *univocal*, *analogous*, that is, a term *which in name is identical throughout its applications, but in meaning is partly the same and partly different*. Thus a man, his food, and his book may all be *healthy*, but with a variation in the applicability of the term. Not to dwell at present on the several sorts of analogy, we will ask at once, does Being refuse to allow us fully to prescind it from its differences? Many authors, resting upon reasons already given for denying that Being is generic, deny also that it is univocal. Their argument often comes ultimately to the plea that fully to prescind from differences is, in the case of Being, impossible or inadvisable. Carleton<sup>41</sup> expressly relies upon the impossibility. Suarez<sup>42</sup> is unsatisfactory in his defence of the analogousness of the term, because, though at times

<sup>41</sup> *Philosophia Universa*, Disp. xl.    <sup>42</sup> *Metaphysics*, Disp. xxviii. sect. iii.

he seems to argue from the transcendentality of Being, and from the impossibility of fully prescind- ing Being from its differences, nevertheless at other times he implies that he has a better and more radical argument. Authors on the same side as Suarez also cause some perplexity by speaking now as though any of the varieties of Being at pleasure were, in some way, included under "the comprehension" of Being, now as though they were rather under its "extension" only.

By way of specimen Suarez shall be cited. "Being," he contends, "however abstractedly taken, of its own nature implies this order, that it belongs primarily and of itself (*primo et per se*), to God." Thus, *within the limits of the very notion of Being*, a hierarchical character is said to declare itself. Being, as it were, asserts of itself that it must be primarily independent, infinite and divine, and can be only secondarily dependent, finite, and mundane. The author sets forth these thoughts as follows: "God, by the very fact that He is a Being, perfectly simple in His essence and infinite, necessarily has in Himself the perfection of all Being in the form of a single, incomprehensible perfection. Hence the notion, itself of Being, as found in God, includes the notion of substance, of wisdom, of justice, and therefore—which is the main point—God's Being is very Being itself, underived and independent; while on the other hand, in any creature, Being is wholly derived, dependent, and limited to some particular sort of perfection. Therefore in God Being has its essential plenitude,

- but in creatures it is only participated, or communicated in measure: God is one single perfection, involving the fulness of Being; but other Beings are only partial, dividing among themselves different finite perfections." Hereupon Suarez puts to
- himself a fair difficulty, which he does not answer with as much clearness as might be desired. He asks whether, instead of considering Being as *Being* in the above argument, he has not been considering Being as respectively first *primitive* and then *derivative*, first *finite* and then *infinite*. Unless he again falls back upon the transcendentality of Being, or the impossibility of perfectly prescinding in its regard, it is not so evident how he completely satisfies the Scotist question, "Why do you not prescind from every difference of Being?" Should he reply, transcendentality forbids, his argument would be easily understood. As a matter of fact he does fall back upon transcendentality,<sup>43</sup> but he does not make it his chief support; he intimates that he can do without it, and even implies that he regards another line of proof as more important. For after having proved that the transcendental<sup>44</sup> "notion of Being is intimately included in all the specialized notions of Being," he signifies that he has another argument, more radical, in store. "Secondly, *what goes most to the root of the matter (deinde quod ad rem maxime spectat)*, the general notion of Being itself, and as such, demands the idea of subordination

<sup>43</sup> Kantists should be warned that there is no reference here to Kant's distinction between "transcendent" and "transcendental."

<sup>44</sup> L.c. n. 31.

between entities." His mind perhaps may be expressed somewhat in this way: I will forego the direct appeal to the transcendentality of Being, for I have another resource. When I am inquiring whether a term is univocal or analogous, I must consider the special applications that are to be made of it; for it is idle to ask me, without further circumstances, if *healthy* and *smiling* are univocal terms; they may be applied univocally to several men, or analogously to men and countries in common. So with regard to Being, I must examine its applications before I pronounce it univocal or analogous. As unapplied it is neither univocal nor analogous, but taken, as logicians say, in "absolute supposition." When I consider the broadest division into Infinite Being and finite beings, I observe an order of dependence constituted within the very notion of Being itself. For "Being of itself essentially demands this order," that the finite can be only by descent from the infinite; thus the one differs in perfection from the other, and the differences are constituted by the very Being of each, not by something that is not formally Being. I can apply the same argument to another broad division of Being into substantial and accidental.<sup>45</sup> I conclude, on the whole, that from the application of the idea Being to its different objects, it is made apparent that the term is predicated of them with differences in the application, in other words, it is analogous.

The position may, perhaps, be illustrated thus.

<sup>45</sup> Disp. xxxi. sect. ii.

On the hypothesis of creation, and on the not extravagant assumption that the ascending scale in animal life is not of metaphysical necessity, we may say that the actual gradation is not involved in the mere notion of "animal." There might have been an animal creation without our present gradations, or even without any gradations whatever. Whereas in the case of Being, Suarez would maintain that its gradational order is involved in the very notion; Being *a se et per se*, Being *per se sed non a se*, Being *nec a se nec per se*; that is, Uncreated Substance, Created Substance, Accidental Being—this order is required by the very nature of Being. You might have had man produced alone without a single other specimen of the animal kingdom: but you cannot have finite Being if you have not the Infinite, nor accidental Being if you have not the substantial, and that from the very nature of Being.

Suarez seems quite unconvincing to the Scotists because he does not give a reason satisfactory to them, for arguing about Being as *Infinite* and as *finite*, when he professes to be arguing about Being *as such*—the famous *Ens qua tale*, *Ens ut sic*. If he urges, as sometimes he does, that Being enters into all differences and is affected by them, so that this its universal *sympathy*, so to speak, is perpetually modifying its mode of application, then he is convicted of want of consistent loyalty to his own principle, by allowing that Being can be predicated univocally of things specifically the same.<sup>46</sup> For if Being is affected by *all* differences, it is affected by

<sup>46</sup> Disp. xxxi. sect. ii. nn. 21, 22.

the difference between any one individual and another of the same species: therefore of no two individuals can it be predicated univocally.

On the other side of the question, the Scotists resolutely maintain that by disregarding all differences they can, because they will it, view Being as one unvarying notion throughout its applications. For as the ordinary mathematician regards a line simply under the aspect of direction in length, to the utter ignoring of breadth, and as the ordinary schoolman regards "animal" simply under the aspect of "sensitive organism," to the utter ignoring of variations in structure and function: so the Scotist claims to consider Being without regard to any of its variations.

• In order that the reader may have some definite teaching on a matter apparently so perplexing, we venture to offer the following propositions as safe.

(a) Two grounds on which many philosophers argue for the analogy of Being, namely, the completeness of the dependency of finite Being on Infinite, and of accidental Being on substantial, are very important: nor are they questioned by the Scotists.

(b) The differences of conclusion which Scotists and anti-Scotists respectively draw from these grounds about the propriety of calling Being analogous, are nothing like so momentous as would be a difference about the grounds themselves.

(c) Those who call Being analogous can give a valid meaning to their words.

The stress of the conflict evidently falls on Being

as applied to God and to creatures: and here the analogists imperil their position if they do not cling tenaciously to the proposition which Dr. Dupont<sup>47</sup> has thus formulated: "When we call God Being *per se*, and creatures Beings *by participation*, we do not wish to express what are properly styled specific differences, which would have to be conceived as additions to the notion Being; but we mean different modes of Being." The phrase "Beings by participation," leads to a final remark on this subject, and an important one too, as directed against pantheism. Creatures are not one Being with God, and in that sense Beings *by participation*. To emphasize this fact many writers call the analogy of Being an analogy of "intrinsic attribution." The gist of what they wish to express is, that created Beings are intrinsically Beings and are not called so simply by reference extrinsically to the Divine Being, as food is called *healthy*, not because intrinsically it is so, but because it conduces to health in man. The latter analogy is said to be of "extrinsic attribution;" healthy is attributed to food because of a health which is outside the food itself, and within man who eats the food.<sup>48</sup>

(4) After having laid down the terms of settlement as regards the meaning to be attached to the word Being, there remains a little to be said on three

<sup>47</sup> *Ontologie*, p. 40.

<sup>48</sup> We omit to consider the case of those who assert more than one term Being, e.g., an *ens confusum*, an *ens distinctum*, and an *ens medium*. Cf. Fonseca, in Lib. IV. *Metaphys.* c. ii. q. ii. Suarez also speaks of an *ens confusissimum*. Disp. xxviii. sect. iii. n. 16.

self-evident principles which spring straight from the notion itself. We will not pause to engage in the not very profitable controversies as to whether the principle of contradiction is prior to that of identity; whether we should distinguish priority of apprehension from priority of judgment; whether the principle of identity is too tautological to be called a principle at all,<sup>49</sup> and so forth. It is enough to say that positive perception is more directly matter of experience than perception of a negative, but that at the same time, every positive perception implies the perception of some negation. Hence our plan will be to regard the principle of identity as included in that of contradiction; we make one complete principle of the two. In tabular form we may arrange the three thus, so as to show the union of No. 1 and No. 2.

- $$\begin{array}{l}
 2. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{What is,} \\ \text{is,} \\ \text{and cannot} \\ \text{at the same time not be.} \end{array} \right. \\ 3. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Between Being and not-Being} \\ \text{there is no medium.} \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right.
 \end{array}$$

Thus No. 2 includes No. 1, as part of itself.

In testing these principles it is requisite to reduce examples to the simple form contemplated in books of philosophy; for of course in a complex

<sup>49</sup> Against taking the principle of identity for tautological stands the fact, that a most powerful discourse might be delivered to enforce the text from Bishop Butler: "Things are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be." How many lives are passed in ignoring this truth!



case there is a mean between mere *is* and *is not*, *yes* and *no*; a distinction is often needed. With this proviso we go on to remark that in Pure Logic the principles are formulated for Affirmation and Negation; in Applied Logic these laws of affirmation and negation are shown, notwithstanding Mill's scepticism, to be valid also for things themselves; and in Ontology we must do what most people neglect to do, we must accommodate the principles to our own chosen sense of the word Being. Herein many fail; they assign a fixed meaning to a term and then, under pressure of convenience, or in a fit of forgetfulness, they depart from their own arrangement. We agreed to consider Being as *Ens Essentiæ*, as standing for a *somewhat* whether existent or not: therefore if now we explain the principles drawn from Being only in reference to *Existence*, we are changing our plan illegitimately. Many a person who could readily expound the principle of Excluded Middle in relation to *existence*, would be puzzled to know what it means in relation to *essence*. The principles, or better, the Principle of Identity and Contradiction, therefore, must now take this shape: "To be a thing is to be a thing, and not to be a nothing: to be any definite thing is to be that definite thing and not something else." The principle of Excluded Middle is less obvious: "Between being a thing and not being a thing, between being any definite thing and not being that definite thing, there is no medium." If we take the form often given, *Quævis res aut est aut non est*—"Every thing or essence either is or is not," we must,

be careful lest we make the second alternative always an absurdity. For if we take the principle in regard not to existence but to essence, where is the sense in the alternative that an essence may not be, that is, may not be an essence? If we insist on finding a meaning under these circumstances, we can find one that will meet Mill's difficulty when he indulges in the supposition that the word may be unmeaning; "Abracadabra either is or is not." We answer that the hypothesis of Abracadabra without a meaning is against the previous hypothesis, that the principle is applied only to Being, for Being, as we shall show presently, must be true; but if we want to take up Mill's supposition, then we interpret his proposition thus: "Every *suggested* Essence either really is one or not:" "Every proposal of a Being either satisfies the requirement of a Being or not:" "Whatever is brought forward as *something apt to exist*, either really is so apt or not." As we shall see later, certain conditions are necessary to make a thing a thing, that is, an intrinsic possibility.

Lest we should be supposed to misrepresent Mill by the assertion, that he does not regard the three primary principles as applicable to things in themselves, we will mention here the single exception which he himself makes, and which does not stand for much, when we take into account his inconsistency in allowing that he can validly make even a single proposition about Noumena. "The only contradictory alternative," he says,<sup>50</sup> "of which

<sup>50</sup> *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*, chap. vi. in fine, cf. chap. xxi. p. 417.

the negative side contains nothing positive, is that between Entity and non-Entity, Existing and non-Existing; and so far as regards that distinction I admit the law of Excluded Middle as applicable to Noumena; they must either exist or not exist. But this is all the applicability I can allow to it." We should be sorry to rob Mill of as much credit as is due to him, for having more or less seen that things in themselves either do exist or do not; it is not always that he is ready with such concessions to common sense.

It has already been remarked that examples must be properly simplified before they can be used as illustrations of the three primary principles. As the last of the three is most open to misconception we will exemplify it in the proposition, "All cows either are or are not red." What must we do with the cows that are red and white, or those the colour of which is not simple red but a tint of red? We must fix upon an exact description of a red cow; and say, for instance, that a red cow is a cow presenting a colour that is at least predominantly red, and having that colour without patches of other colour interspersed. Then supposing the physical difficulties of verifying such a definition to be overcome, we are left with the safe metaphysical truth, that every cow either satisfies all our requirements or does not. To satisfy them only partially is failure. Hegelians, of course, object to these rigid distinctions between *either* and *or*: we ourselves admit how difficult they are to establish in the complicated cases of experience;

but we cannot therefore allow the Hegelian doctrine that everything merges into its opposite, and that Reason takes up and reconciles the contradictions of the Understanding, by a process wherein "finite categories or formulæ of thought work their own dissolution and pass over into the opposite categories."<sup>51</sup> As a mystery guaranteed to us by revelation, we may believe that the God whom natural intelligence discovers to be One God considered absolutely in His Essence, is yet, when considered relatively in His Personality, three Persons; but revelation itself could not make us believe what defies rational belief, namely, that one God was at the same time, and under the same aspect, both one God and three Gods.

At the conclusion of the chapter on Being, the remark is worth making that to Being, as here expounded, stands opposed what the scholastics call *nihil positivum*, that which positively is a non-entity, or presents intrinsic contradiction so as to defy actualization; not *nihil privativum*, which means an entity that has not indeed been brought into existence but might be made to exist.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 125.

<sup>52</sup> Mr. Bradley seeks to lay needless difficulty in the way of our arrival at conception of Nothing through the idea of Thing and its negation. "Take the idea of Reality, I could not admit that in thought all our ideas are qualified by their negations; I should doubt if the highest term we arrive at can be said to have an opposite even in thought, although by an error we are given to think so." (*Principles of Logic*, p. 148.)

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) The practice, so much in vogue now-a-days, of appending notes and illustrations to philosophical dissertations has for its chief purpose to be suggestive, to give some glimpses into varieties of thought, to show some of the surroundings that really do lie about the path which author and reader have been mainly intent on following, though it would have been a distraction to have taken express notice of them before. The aim, then, is not to describe whole systems, nor to give complete historic sketches, nor to form a continuous line of thought from one note to another; but to gather a few appropriate fragments here and there, and put them by the side of a continuous chapter, to illustrate different parts of its contents.

In the case of Being, he is a poor sort of philosopher who does not care to know anything about the vast amount of human speculation which, in all ages, has been devoted to that notion. It is hopeless to follow many of the wild flights of imagination in pursuit of the supposed transformations of Being; Oriental dreams before the coming of Christ, and Gnostic fancies shortly after His coming, are specimens of what we mean. The Greeks, who were characteristically a clear-headed race,<sup>1</sup> did not escape the fascination of Being and its dangers; for while the Eleatics held that immutable Being was everything, and that Change or Becoming were unrealities, Heraclitus fell into the opposite extreme, teaching, or at least seeming to teach, that there was no fixed Being, but only perpetual flux. His words are notorious—*πάντα ῥεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει, οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τὸ ὄν τοῦ μὴ*

<sup>1</sup> English readers may find some of the Greek doctrines respecting Being illustrated in Professor Jowett's *Plato*, Vol. IV. p. 458.

ὄντος ἐστὶ. Both these errors are perpetuated to the present day, when we find men speaking of phenomena as idle shows without reality, which give no indications of things in themselves; and when we find them so possessed with the idea of ceaseless evolution, that they place *Becoming* before *Being* in the order of important ideas. It has even been said that, as *Being* was the leading idea of an age that believed in fixity of species, so *Becoming* has grown to be the leading idea of an age that believes in endless transformations. Such is the change of the *Zeit-Geist*, or Spirit of the age, if indeed a certain class of people are not too self-asserting in their claim to represent the age.

(2) Hegel's identification of Being with Nothing is so notorious, that some interest should naturally arise to see how he describes this Being of his. Being, then, is not a notion, but it is the beginning of thought. "When we begin to think we have nothing but thought in its *merest indeterminateness* and absence of *specialization*."<sup>2</sup> Such indeterminateness is not derived by abstracting from previous determinations; it is "original and underived indeterminateness, which is previous to all definite character, and is the very first of all. It is not something felt or perceived by the spiritual sense, or pictured in imagination; it is only and merely thought, and as such it forms the beginning." Impossible as such a feat may seem, Chalybäus is said to have given a popular exposition of Hegel's doctrines; so from the popular account we will borrow the following description of Being:<sup>3</sup> "First of all let us ask, wherein consists this Being, or what do we perceive in it? We can only say that as yet we do not distinguish anything in it—

<sup>2</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *The History of Speculative Philosophy*, p. 365, English translation.

may more, that we are not even capable of distinguishing it from empty and pure nought. . . . Being is the pure want of determination, it is thinking which thinks nothing, it is intuition which looks straight before it, without perceiving anything; it is just as if we were staring into the sky, of which we could not even say that it was blue, or that it was not the earth, or that it was not ourselves." One use of this description of Being will be to bring out, by contrast, the fact that with us Being is a concept, that it has an objective meaning, and that it is the very opposite of Nothing. Even Hegel adds that along with the assertion that Being is identical with Nothing, we must take the equally true assertion that it is not identical with Nothing; else we shall be one-sided in our view.

The great means for reconciling this and all other contradictions is the famous "dialectic process" which is at work in the constitution at once of thought and of things, for both meet in one identity. By the dialectic process is meant<sup>4</sup> "an indwelling tendency outward and beyond, by which the one-sidedness and the limitation of the formulæ of the understanding are seen in their true light and shown to be the negation of these formulæ. Things are infinite just because they involve their own dissolution. Thus understood, Dialectic is discovered to be the life and soul of scientific progress, the dynamic which alone gives an immanent connexion and necessity to the subject-matter of science; and in a word is seen to constitute the real and true, as opposed to the external exaltation above the finite. • Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work. It is also the soul of all know-

<sup>4</sup> Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, pp. 141, 143, cf. 125, 129. See also Professor Jowett's Introduction to Plato's Dialogue, *The Sophist*.

ledge which is truly scientific. . . . The limitations of the finite do not come merely from without; its own nature is the cause of its abrogation, and by its own means it passes into its counterpart. . . . Everything that surrounds us may be viewed as an instance of Dialectic. We are aware that everything finite, instead of being inflexible and ultimate, is rather changeable and transient; and this is exactly what we mean by that Dialectic of the finite, by which the finite as implicitly other than what it is, is forced to surrender its own immediate or natural Being, and to turn suddenly into its opposite. All things finite, it is said, meet their doom; and in saying so we have a perception that Dialectic is the universal and irresistible power before which nothing can stay, however secure and stable it may deem itself. . . . Take as an illustration the motion of the heavenly bodies. At this moment the planet stands at this spot, but implicitly it is the possibility of being in another spot; and that possibility of being otherwise the planet brings into existence by moving. A Dialectic is recognized in the common proverbs, *Summum jus, summa injuria*—‘Pride goes before a fall;’ ‘Too much wit out-wits itself.’” The “Dialectic process” if watered down to mean some such truths as are often set forth in discoursing on texts like, “Extremes meet,” “The knowledge of opposites is one,” “Too far East is West,” might be acceptable; but in the undiluted form it gets into the heads of Hegelians and drives them to all sorts of extravagant utterances.

(3) Should it be said that the identification of something with nothing, or at least the assertion of the nothingness of all created things is sanctioned by the Fathers of the Church, unless indeed we put the still worse interpretation on their words, that they make out



God to be nothing; we reply that they expressly teach the opposite, and that the passages in which they might seem inclining to the errors in question admit of easy reconciliation with the truth. The fact is, that in their desire to bring out the immense difference between Uncreated and Created Being, they affirm on the one side that the latter is a *comparative* nothing,<sup>5</sup> and on the other side that our predicates, derived from finite experiences, may be denied in regard to the God whom they so inadequately represent. But Scotus Erigena clearly overstrains this style of phraseology. The following are a few specimen utterances of his: "No category can properly include God in its signification;" "God is above all form, and is therefore rather no form than form;" "As the Divine Goodness is beyond comprehension, it is called, *per excellentiam*, Nothing;" "God is beyond Being, and is in General beyond the utterable and the intelligible;" "The Divine ignorance stands for nothing else than the infinite and incomprehensible Wisdom of God." Such modes of speech cannot be recommended; it being, for example, a very poor reason why God's wisdom should be called ignorance because it is at the furthest possible remove from ignorance and high above all that passes for wisdom among men. Yet on the Scotist model Nicholas de Cusa calls our highest wisdom *docta ignorantia*: in God he finds all affirmations and negations reconciled.

(4) While treating of Being as not a generic and not a univocal notion, we mentioned Carleton as one who holds that Being does not include, within its "comprehension," its own differences. His words may usefully be given:<sup>6</sup> "The very fact that we have Being narrowed down to some special form (*ens contractum*)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Isaias xl. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Universa Philosophia*, Disp. xl. sect. vii.

implies that there is some other concept *outside the concept of Being*, though Being does not lie outside the concept of it. Therefore Being is abstracted from the differences of Being with only the incomplete abstraction known as that of the Including and the Included." While, however, some thus deny that more determinate ideas come under the "comprehension" of Being, others might suppose, that because of the peculiar nature of the term, Being does, after a manner, hold all other ideas even in its "comprehension," though not of course explicitly. In this light, rightly or wrongly, they might read such passages of St. Thomas as these: "There can be no differentiating note which is outside the concept of Being;"<sup>7</sup> "To Being nothing can be added as of a nature extrinsic to it, in the way in which a specific difference is added to a genus, or an accident to a subject. For every nature is, by its very essence, Being; and only in so far can anything be called additional to Being as it expresses the manner of Being, which is not expressed by the word itself."<sup>8</sup> And once more, "an addition may be made to Being inasmuch as the term is brought down to its particular conditions (*contrahitur*) by means of the ten highest genera. But what these add to Being is not some accident, nor some specific difference outside the essence of Being, but a determinate mode of Being which is founded in the very Essence of the thing." The conciliation of opinions seems possible, since they are settlements of usage that are in dispute rather than truths themselves. Carleton is quite right in the assertion, "that the differences of Being cannot at all be conceived apart from Being, while Being can be conceived apart from its differences;" and that so far the differences lie

<sup>7</sup> *Sum. i. q. iii. a. v.*<sup>8</sup> *Quæst. Disp. de Veritat. q. i. a. i.*

outside the concept of Being. On the other hand, all these differences are themselves Being after a manner in which no generic notion can be predicated of its specific differences.

(5) This is not the treatise in which to discuss innate ideas; nor are these much in favour among philosophers at present, unless they be reduced to the category of the hereditary effects of habitual experience; but we may mention that Being is specially the idea which is supposed to defy our means of acquiring notions for ourselves. Hence Mr. Veitch says that we have "the notion of existence *a priori*," and that "if we are only conscious of an object as we apprehend it, and only apprehend it as we affirm it to exist, then existence must be attributed to the object by the mind; and this could not be done unless existence, as a notion, virtually pre-existed in the mind." The idea of Being, such as we have described it, is quite within the reach of man's ordinary means of acquiring knowledge.

## CHAPTER III.

### ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) In what way the intellect is said to know all things under the aspect of essences.
- (2) The special way in which the intellect is said to know the essences of some things. (a) Attack on the scholastic doctrine about this point. (b) Defence of the doctrine within proper limits ; proof of the position.
- (3) •Essences are assigned sometimes according to physical, sometimes according to metaphysical constituents.
- (4) Distinction between essence and existence in an actually existent creature.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(1) *Essentia* is not a word which we find in a select Latin Dictionary that contains only the most approved vocables of the classical period ; but it certainly had its own period of high repute in the flourishing days of scholasticism, and even now, according to Martinus Scriblerus, it is faring better than most of its kind. "For," he says, "instead of being, like them, quite abolished, it has survived in the chemists' shops, where it has even been raised to the rank of a quintessence." Ridicule, however, does not always kill ; and we are going to show that the term "essence" is still alive, and must continue to live, if science is to have any life in it. The word has a wider and a narrower signification, each of which we have to examine.

It is asserted to be the prerogative of intellect proper, that it knows all its objects under the aspect of essences; and this its power is made a strongly distinguishing mark between the perception which is characteristically human and mere animal perception. A writer who was no schoolman, Lewes, more than once falls back on this distinction; saying, for instance, that "the animal thinks, but only in sensations and images, not in abstractions and symbols. The animal perceives no *object*, no *causal connexion*," that is, nothing as *object*, or as *causal connexion*; and this deficiency comes from want of the faculty to apprehend the *whatness* of things. Here is a virtual recognition of the broadest meaning of the word *essence*, though this is not the term which Lewes himself would have used to express his opinion. Still his doctrine, which is accepted in the recent work of Mr. Romanes, so far as it is true, implies that no animal can ask or answer the question, *What?* Man, on the contrary, even though uncultured, is ever employed on the investigation of the *what* in things, and his conceptions, however inadequate, take the form of a *quiddity* or *essence*. Substantially, at all events, he understands the force of the interrogative pronoun *quid*. Hence the lines of Hudibras have some truth:

•  
He knew *what's what*, and that's as deep  
As metaphysic wit can peep.

As a specimen of the scholastic teaching, the words of Father Lahousse will suffice: "Essence is the

formal object of the intellectual act ; for the intellect expresses all that it apprehends by terms in which it conceives other objects of a like sort, such terms, for example, as *substance* and *accident*, *spirit* and *body*, *infinite* and *finite*, *existent* and *non-existent*, *singular* and *universal*, *present* and *absent*. Now whoever apprehends that whereby a thing is placed in a certain definite order, apprehends an *essence*." So much for the meaning of *essence* in the widest sense, according to which *Being* is the most generalized essence : every object is a Being so far as in answer to question, What is it? the intellect must reply, It is *a something*, an *Ens essentialæ*.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Up to the present point our doctrine will probably not provoke many dissentients, though really it does involve the assertion of a thorough-going difference between sense and intellect, such as the school of Hume flatly deny. Openly, the tug of war begins over our next claim, which involves higher pretensions to the knowledge of essences. The schoolmen held firmly, that those objects which they called *natural*, as distinguished from *artificial* objects—a distinction which they must have felt they could not always draw with precision—were not mere aggregates of cohering elements, but essences, each constituted strictly a unit by an indivisible substantial form : for it was only some writers who allowed the possibility of two or more substantial forms superposed one on another. How far the scholastic doctrine is demonstrable is discussed in *Cosmology*. Here it suffices to prove

<sup>1</sup> *Psychologia*, thesis xxvi.

that we can, more or less, reach the essential constitution of a number of things—find that which, as *essentia*, gives them their *esse* after the way in which a man's *sapientia* gives him his *sapere*. Where we cannot absolutely touch the goal, at least we can make approximations.

(a) Attacks upon our present position may be divided into three possible degrees. (i.) The fact of essence may be granted, but all further knowledge of it denied; (ii.) the fact may be declared doubtful; (iii.) the so-called fact may be pronounced a fiction of the mind. To borrow an illustration from the hidden personality of an Oriental monarch, who sometimes holds himself aloof from his people as the great, mysterious power in the background, we may find these three corresponding stages of belief and disbelief. One subject of the prince might say, "There is such a potentate, but that is all I know;" another, "I doubt whether there is such a potentate;" a third, "Such potentate certainly does not exist, and those styled his Ministers are our real and only rulers."

The three modes of attack are actually made, and we certainly shall not understand the important question of essences if we are too idle to go through the successive stages of the controversy. Adversaries shall state their own case, and we will reply.

(1) Hobbes<sup>2</sup> had made the sarcastic remark that "quiddity" was one of the words which God had *not* taught Adam in Paradise; but to Locke especially is traced the origin of the great revolution

<sup>2</sup> *Leviathan*, Pt. I. c. iv.

against the reign of *essences*. In praise of Locke, Voltaire says, "He alone has marked out the development of the human mind, in a book where there is nothing but truth, and, what makes the work perfect, every truth is clearly set forth." To this general commendation Mill has added his special approval in regard to the doctrine of *essences*:<sup>3</sup> "It was reserved for Locke to convince philosophers, that the supposed essences were merely the significations of their names; nor among the signal services which this writer rendered to philosophy was there one more needful or more valuable." Accordingly Mill teaches that definition can only be of names, not of real essences. Evidently, then, it is our duty to acquaint ourselves with Locke's doctrine, and to see whether we can accept Mill's judgment on its value. If we like to take the teaching first of all at second hand, we have it in the commendatory words of Reid, who makes the view his own:<sup>4</sup> "The works of God are all imperfectly known by us. We see their outside or perhaps we discover some of their qualities and relations, by observation and experiment, assisted by reason; but we can give no definition of the meanest of them, which comprehends its real *essence*. It is justly observed by Locke, that *nominal* essences only, which are the creatures of our own minds, are perfectly apprehended by us; and even of these there are many too simple in their nature to admit

<sup>3</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. vi. § 2.

<sup>4</sup> Reid on Aristotle's *Logic*, c. ii. sect. iv. See Locke, *Human Understanding*, Bk. III. c. iii.



of definition." The reference which we give to the author himself bears out the above compendium of his doctrine, which explicitly is that "the essences of things are nothing else but our abstract ideas." Thus Locke grants that things have essences—"real essences:" what he denies is, that we can know anything more than the "nominal essences," which Hamilton<sup>5</sup> says is only another phrase for "logical essences," or "the abstract notions worked out by general terms." In other words, Locke is here a nominalist or a conceptualist in his denial of reality to universal ideas; but he is most careful to insist, especially in his polemic with the Anglican Bishop of Worcester, that "there is an internal constitution of things, on which their properties depend." So much by way of stating the first antagonistic position, which is that our knowledge is limited to the fact of the existence of real essences, while for the rest we have to content ourselves with nominal essences.

(ii.) and (iii.) The two other positions may be dealt with together, as the step from agnosticism to positive denial is only one of audacity in making assertions. As a representative writer, we will take Mill, in weighing whose utterances we must bear in mind that he allows a knowledge of no substance, bodily or mental, and of no efficient causality, and of no metaphysically necessary truth; indeed, his theory of knowledge is what determines his rejection of essences. These are important items to keep in view while considering his assertions with

<sup>5</sup> Note on Reid, l.c.

respect to essences, the gist of which may be conveyed in a few passages.<sup>6</sup> "An *essential* proposition is one which is purely verbal; which asserts of a thing, under a particular name, only what is asserted of it in the fact of calling it by that name; and which, therefore, either gives no information, or gives it respecting the name, not the thing. Non-essential or accidental propositions may be called *real* propositions in opposition to *verbal*." In other words, no analytical proposition conveys any real information; and that to which we are at liberty to apply the word *essential*, is at most an explanation of the meaning of a word. With the understanding that the matter is a verbal one, we may claim to know the essence of classes: "The distinction between the *essence* of a class and the attributes, or properties which are *not essential*, amounts to nothing more than the difference between those attributes of a class which are, and those which are not, involved in the connotation (meaning) of a class-name." So much for what is allowed; now for what is disallowed: "As applied to individuals, the word *essence* has no meaning, except in connexion with the exploded tenets of the realists; and what the schoolmen chose to call the essence of an individual, was the essence of the class to which the individual was most familiarly referred." Here Mill falls into the ordinary blunder of attributing to the schoolmen generally, what was the extravagance of a comparative few;<sup>7</sup> and accordingly he goes on to identify

<sup>6</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. cc. vi. vii. and viii.

<sup>7</sup> See *First Principles of Knowledge*, Pt. II. c. iii. n. 6.

the doctrine of essences with an error which most of the defenders of that doctrine thoroughly repudiate. "Aristotelians thought that ice was made ice, not by the possession of certain properties to which mankind have chosen to attach that name, but by a *participation in the nature of a certain general substance*."<sup>8</sup> Of course, Platonists rather than Aristotelians would be likely to commit such an extravagance; but Mill says boldly and without limitation, "Aristotelians." Next we come to a statement of Mill's own position: "The inmost nature or essence of a thing is apt to be regarded as something unknown, which, if we knew it, would account for all the phenomena which the thing exhibits to us. But this unknown something is a supposition without evidence. We have no ground to suppose that there is anything, which, if known to us, would afford to our intellect this satisfaction: would sum up, as it were, the knowable attributes of an object in a single sentence. Moreover, if there were such a central property, it would not answer to the idea of an inmost nature: for if knowable by any intelligence, it must, like other properties, be relative to the intelligence which knows it, that is, it must consist in impressing that intelligence in some special way; the only sense in which the verb *to know* means anything."

According to Mill, therefore, an essential property is one which is part of the very definition or meaning of the word which stands as subject in a sentence;

<sup>8</sup> This crooked version of a chapter in the history of philosophy is repeated in the *Examination*, c. xvii. in initio.

and such essence is verbal, not real. As for any real essential nature in physical things, we know of none such, and in any case the relativity of all knowledge would be a bar to the knowledge of essences, such as the schoolmen assert. Here we have a doctrine common in the school of Hume: and we will illustrate it no further except by letting Lewes repeat its chief tenets. He likens the Aristotelian essences to the pure space which is supposed to be the background of all things; essences are empty as space, mere negations of all attributes or phenomena: indeed there can be no absolute thing in itself, for "nothing exists in and for itself," and the universe known to us is a system of correlated events.

Whether on the above principles, the attitude taken with respect to essences is one of agnosticism or of positive denial matters little for the refutation which we have to give of the whole doctrine: but at least the positive denial sounds not a little arbitrary.

(b) In doing something to rehabilitate a much discredited teaching of the schoolmen, we may start from less disputed points. At least in the abstract sciences, and notably in mathematics, it is maintainable that we can devise essential definitions which stand good amid accidental variations, and have a most unmistakeably real<sup>9</sup> significance. Reid confesses as much when he says, that from the essence of a triangle we are able to deduce its properties. We can determine exactly what con-

<sup>9</sup> See our definition of *real* in chapter ii. p. 32.

stitutes the precise nature of certain figures, distinguishes them specifically from other figures, and enables us to infer their necessary attributes. In regard to this deduction we must not let ourselves be puzzled by the very narrow limits within which some have chosen to confine our data: as, for example, when it is declared that from the nature of a straight line we cannot infer that it is the shortest way between two points, because the notion "straight line" does not contain the notion "shortest way;" or again, when it is declared that certain conclusions are not *a priori* because we mentally construct a geometrical figure in order to follow out our reasoning, and thus institute a sort of experiment *a posteriori*. It is intolerable so to take out all meaning from the process of deduction as to deny that we are using it because, in arguing from essential definitions, we picture objects to the mind, or use terms not verbally identical with the terms which are explicitly set down as the data. On this rigorist interpretation no proposition in Euclid would give deductive results. We could not deduce from the nature of a triangle that its angles are equal to two right angles, because its definition does not say, for instance, what a right angle is. Remove these unwarrantable restrictions and it may be fairly affirmed that in mathematics we find examples of real essences,<sup>10</sup> and of their deduced properties. Moral science would furnish us with similar results; but we must

<sup>10</sup> According to the definition of *real* given in the previous chapter.

hasten on to the main controversy, the essences of natural objects in the concrete.

To start with, it may be observed, that to fight out this battle to the end belongs, not to General, but to Special Metaphysics—to Cosmology, which treats of such questions as the ultimate constitution of bodies, and to Psychology, which lays down what is meant by a spiritual substance. As to the essence of matter we may note two divergent tendencies. Those whose training, before they take up philosophy, has lain largely in chemical analyses and syntheses, and in reducing what they see in physical nature to mathematical formulæ, are apt to assume without any hesitation that, given a few elementary atoms which are unaccounted for, all the other differences between bodies must be simply matters of arrangement between parts; all are accidental, none substantial; all are extra-essential, none intrinsically essential. Contrariwise with the man who takes up philosophy, without previous training in physical science, having his mind unfamiliar with the conceptions of chemistry and mathematics, his tendency is to regard all striking changes as replacements of one essence by another, never as rearrangements of the same elemental forces. Hence there is a difficulty to get the opposite sides fairly to weigh each other's arguments. While it is an undoubted want in a man's mind, if it has never taken up Descartes' great idea of applying algebraic symbols to material phenomena, on the other hand it is decidedly a mental twist to have Descartes' exaggerated notions about

the sufficiency of algebraic symbols to explain matter. To represent the scholastics of the present time as men all ignorant of experimental science would be as inaccurate as to represent them as all clinging, without abatement, to the old multiplicity of essential forms in all their abundance. One point on which they are unanimous is, that the soul is not indeed the body, but the essential form of the human body; few would deny a similar office to a vital principle in the mere animals: very many affirm the like for vegetative life: and below this point the dissidents begin to multiply.

It belongs to another treatise to attempt an adjudication of this very difficult controversy: but we at present must try a simpler method of justifying the assertion that we can know something about essential natures. In the rough the form of expression could hardly be rejected, that science seeks to arrive at the very nature of things, and has some measure of success in the enterprise. Even Mill allows us this much; for in one of the very chapters where he has been scouting the doctrine of definitions which profess to give the real essences of things, he comes round,<sup>11</sup> at the close of his discussion, to these admissions: "Whenever the inquiry into the definition of the name of *any real object* consists of anything else than a mere comparison of authorities, we tacitly assume that a meaning must be found for the name compatible with its continuing to denote, if possible all, but at any rate the greater or more important part, of the

<sup>11</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. viii. in fine.

things of which it is commonly predicated. The inquiry, therefore, into the definition is an inquiry *into the resemblances and differences among those things*; whether there be any resemblance running through them all; if not, through what portion a general resemblance can be traced; and finally what are the common attributes the possession of which gives to them all, or to that portion of them, the character of resemblance which has led to their being classed together?" So far Mill's words do something to relieve definitions from his charge that they are *nominal*, not *real*: and that "the simplest and most correct notion of a definition is, a proposition declaratory of the meaning of a word." What follows in the same extract will do something to relieve the definition from the further charge that its claim to be *essential* is a false pretence. "In giving a distinct connotation (meaning) to the general name, the philosopher will endeavour to fix upon such as are common to all the things usually denoted by the name, as also *of the greatest importance in themselves*; either directly, or from the number, the conspicuousness, or the interesting character *of the consequences to which they lead*. He will select as far as possible such *differentiæ* as lead to the greatest number of interesting *propria*. But to *penetrate to the more hidden agreement on which these more obvious and superficial agreements depend*, is often one of the most difficult of scientific problems. And as it is among the most difficult, so it seldom fails to be among *the most important*."

We express no surprise that Mill should have



spoken so; he would have had to be egregiously ignorant of the nature of science if he had described its inquiries as anything less radical. It was his irrational denial of substance and efficient causality, and his equivalent denial of any knowledge beyond that of each one's own states of sensation, thought, and volition, that made him refuse to admit that the definitions of science were *real* and had some degree of success in assigning *essences*. In spite of his denials, a confession that definitions are more than nominal and accidental is clearly implied in such a sentence as this: "Since upon the result of the inquiry *respecting the causes of the properties* of a class of *things*, there *incidentally* depends the question, what shall be the *meaning of a word*: some of the most profound and invaluable investigations which philosophy presents to us, have offered themselves *under the guise of inquiries into the definition of a name*." So after all, nominal essences are only "incidental" objects of scientific inquiry, not the sole inquiries possible to men when they search into essences.

As it is highly advantageous to our cause to show our several adversaries in the act of conceding to us the foundations on which we build our argument, alongside of Mill's utterances we will place a sentence from one who is his closest colleague. Mr. Bain, who, however, says elsewhere that he is not sure that there is anything more in matter left for us to discover; that he is not convinced that there is a picture beyond what we call the veil, but that our veil may be the

picture; nevertheless writes as follows:<sup>12</sup> "If we understood more thoroughly the ultimate arrangement of the atoms of bodies, we might not improbably find that one fundamental property was the *foundation*—a *real essence*, of which the other characters are but the *propria*." It is something of this kind that we want to show.

The substantial gain to be got out of these quotations from adversaries is, not that they fully concede our doctrine, but that they supply corrections to errors in their own context: that they furnish us with a part of our argument; and that they are admissions which only need interpreting on better principles with regard to the nature of human knowledge, in order to lead to our conclusions.

We cannot lay too much emphasis on the fact that scepticism in the school of Hume about essences, does not begin at this point; it rests on utterly false theories about man's power of knowledge, which is logically reduced to a mere chemistry of ideas, or of the phenomenal states of self-consciousness. Of course on these shifting and unsubstantial grounds we can build up no knowledge of essences. Hence the brunt of the battle falls to the share of another manual in this series. Nevertheless, even here, where we presuppose our own theory of knowledge, we must put forth a defence of the

<sup>12</sup> *Deductive Logic*, Bk. I. c. ii.; *Inductive Logic*, Bk. III. c. ii. Comte said that the natural tendency of man was to ask with regard to anything, "What is the one persistent type that reappears in every member?" The search for types is the search for essences.

doctrine that we can attain to some insight into essences.

Our claim is moderate. We fully admit that the human intellect has a very imperfect acquaintance with essences, and must often put up with make-shifts; or, in the words of St. Thomas,<sup>13</sup> "because the essential differences of things are frequently unknown, we use accidental differences to mark those which are essential." Thus on the hypothesis—which we need not discuss—that there is an essential difference between gold and silver, certainly we do not penetrate to this fundamental distinction, but have to discriminate it by such accidental characters as specific gravity, solubility, colour, and so forth. It is important to notice here, how St. Thomas himself removes that stone of stumbling which many fancy that they find over and over again in the scholastic system. He distinctly affirms that essences can often be indicated by us only in an indirect way, through non-essential characteristics. Here, perhaps, is the best place to enter a caution against a way of speaking, which often leads to fatal misconceptions on the part of hearers, and is not always without mistake on the part of the speakers. It is often said that "simple apprehension" seizes the essences of things, and that universal ideas also are about essences. The assertion is clearly true of essence in the wider sense, and often as clearly untrue of essence in the narrower sense. Certainly it is not the way of physical science to discover the inmost nature of

<sup>13</sup> In Lib. I. *De Anima*, Lect. i.

objects by easy intuition, but rather by laborious methods of inference from phenomena; and as to universal ideas there are more of them that refer to "accidents" than to "essences."<sup>14</sup> Further it is to be noted, that if we take essences, not in the concrete, but for the generalized essences which are reached by mental abstraction, then frequently we do, at first starting, apprehend objects under the universal and essential ideas of *Thing, Substance, Body*, and even under more determinate conceptions that are essential inasmuch as they give the general nature of the object, as *man, boy, sailor*; all which are immediate perceptions only on the supposition of many previous experiences as to what outside appearances imply. Furthermore, the observation is to the point, that we must not confuse "simple apprehension," when it means *mere apprehension* as distinguished from *judgment*, with "simple apprehension," when it means apprehension of a simple, as distinguished from a complex object. Of a nursery rhyme we could say that it was "*simple nonsense*," meaning thereby a simplicity that could not be meant when a bitter opponent of Hegel affirmed that his system was "*simple nonsense*." One would be nonsense of a simple character, the other of a character anything but simple. If, therefore, we take "simple apprehension" to be, as St. Thomas calls it, *intelligentia indivisibilium et incomplexorum*, "the perception of what is indivisible and without complexity," then the notions so gathered are our most elementary intuitions; they form the very fundamentals or

<sup>14</sup> *First Principles*, Bk. II. c. iii. n. 6.

essentials of knowledge; they give us our first principles.<sup>15</sup>

After attending to these most necessary warnings we proceed with our vindication for man of some knowledge about essences in the stricter sense of the term; or about that in things which, as far as they are concerned, makes them what precisely they are, which, as far as our investigations into them are concerned, answers our question, What? and which, as far as their operations are concerned, is more particularly called their *nature*.

As a scheme for making our general position more readily understood, we will take the broad division of things into matter and spirit, and begin by asking what we know of material essences. At first we are struck by the apparent anomaly, that here we seem to know complex much better than simple essences. It appears that a chemist knows what the nature of water is, but not what is the nature of either of its component elements. The fallacy here is kindred with the common delusion that evident inference is satisfactory, while the evident intuition of simple, irresolvable truth is not. Undoubtedly, if the chemist assumes a certain number of ultimate substances, he can trace all other inorganic bodies, and in some sense all organic bodies, to his primitive components. The main point left for discussion in regard to the compound is, whether it is rigorously a new substance, or only

<sup>15</sup> When in the first chapter we define Being as *ens essentia*, essence is here taken in the highly abstract order—indeed the highest—and it refers primarily to substantial essence, secondarily to accidental; for analogously accidents have their essences.

a very intimate re-arrangement of old substances. Given the elements, it is known *what* are the elements that combine, and in *what* proportions, and under *what* conditions, they combine to produce *what* results; all these are *whats* or *quiddities*, known within certain limits. But if we fall back upon the assumed elements, which hitherto have been taken as mere data, then they are found all along to have demanded explanation, and not to have had properly assigned to them their essential definitions. Probably many of them are really\* compounds, resolvable into simpler constituents; but if we imagine ourselves at length to have arrived at our ultimate element or elements of matter, what do we know of essences there? Those who are convinced that the Aristotelian theory of matter and form<sup>16</sup> is correct, may call their doctrine a theory that goes pretty near to the root or essence of the question; those who hold one or other of the remaining theories which have gained credit in philosophy, vary in what, after a new sense of the word, we may call their *radicalism*; that is, their definitions of matter go, some more, some less, near to the root. Lastly, those who are unconvinced by any of the prevalent theories about the essential constitution of matter are in the case which we have heard St. Thomas describe: because to them "essential differences are unknown," they "use accidental differences to mark those which are substantial." They describe matter by its most general properties, *weight, inertia, extension, and impenetrability*.

<sup>16</sup> An outline of the theory is given in "Notes and Illustrations," n. 1.

If, therefore, it be asked what, after all, do the schoolmen know about the essence of matter, and if we frame our reply so as to keep clear of points controverted among them; then from the position of General Metaphysics we answer by telling the inquirer to consult two sources of information: first, books treating of cosmology, and arguing their case largely on metaphysical principles and in reference to matter in its most generic sense; and next, books treating of the several special sciences, and arguing their case on physical principles and in reference to matter in some specific order. Our contention is that, when together, these books do show some knowledge, more or less adequate, about *essences*; that they do furnish replies, more or less final, to the question, what is this, that, and the other. For example the laws of motion, of gravitation, and of combination by definite proportions; the reduction of light and sound to vibratory movements calculable mathematically; the doctrine of the transformation of energy; the assertion of comparatively few chemical elements—all these are approximations to a knowledge of essences; they are the knowledge of what, with a certain looseness of expression, may be called secondary or derivative essences. Again, to know matter as substance and efficient cause is to know it under an *essential* aspect, though a highly generalized one. Even the classificatory sciences, such as botany and zoology, which in part at least are concerned with matter, so far as they go on “a natural system,” point in the direction of

essences. In short, the very admission that there is such a thing as physical science, and that science is *cognitio rerum per causas*—a knowledge of things according to the *rationale* of them—is tantamount to saying, that some manner of acquaintance with essences is possible; that the world does present its objects ranged according to at least a certain number of different kinds, and that we can do something to mark off one kind from another.<sup>17</sup> Whatever be the extent of "the law of continuity," at least it does not abolish every single specific difference in the world; and there are other differences that have established a character which is, if not in the fullest sense specific, at least is secondarily and practically specific: for example the difference between "chalk and cheese." To this moderate extent the schoolmen are justified in their pretensions to have knowledge of essences; but if we must signalize the points most provocative of debate within the modern scholastic camp, it is the multiplication of essential forms to account for what are called the substantial changes of chemical composition or decomposition, and the assumption concerning the irresolvable elements, that they are constituted by two real distinct principles, one

<sup>17</sup> "I have no sympathy with the oft-repeated attempts of philosophers to show that the fundamental ideas of Physical Science are inadequate, disconnected, and frequently inconsistent. Without attempting to determine how much of justice there is in this indictment, I readily admit that it is in the main true, but I am not so much struck with these defects as filled with admiration at the manifold variety of consistent and trustworthy results which, with such imperfect means, science has established." (Lotze, *Metaphysics*, Bk. II. c. viii. § 21.)



active and the other passive, one form and the other matter.

Such is a short statement of what we claim to know about the essences of the material universe; and if the account is examined carefully, it will be found not to differ so very widely from the one which our more moderate adversaries give, when they are delivering, not their worse, but their better sentiments on the subject. Let De Morgan stand as an example: "The most difficult inquiry which one can propose to oneself is, to find out what anything *is*: in all probability we do not know what we are talking about when we ask such a question. The philosophers of the middle ages were much concerned with the *is* or *essence* of things; they argued to their own minds, with great justice,<sup>18</sup> that if they could only find out what a thing *is*, they would find out all *about it*: they tried and failed. Their successors, taking warning by their example, have inverted the proposition and have satisfied themselves that the only way to find out what a thing *is*, lies in finding out what we can *about it*." Precisely so taught Aristotle, and so teach we: it is quite false to say with Mill, that our doctrine of essences implies the ultra-realistic belief in universals *a parte rei*, or to say that it supposes *a priori* conceptions of essences, not gathered from experience. We may read of a mystic like Boehme, that walking one day near Görlitz, he had suddenly revealed to him the essences, the properties, and the uses of

<sup>18</sup> Unjustifiably, says Mill, in a passage already quoted. See De Morgan's *Logic*, chap. ix. in initio.

herbs, so that he was able to write his book *De Signatura Rerum* : yet even so it was from the outer appearances of plants that he argued what their curative powers must be. Many also of the anti-scholastic writers of the Renaissance, such as the Cabbalists, Reuchlin, and Cornelius Agrippa, or the physicists Cardanus and Paracelsus, are recorded to have claimed a sort of intuition into essences, or a discovery of them by other than scientific means. But we are quite content with De Morgan's system of inferring what a thing *is*, after observing what it *does*.

In beginning our sketch of the position which scholastic philosophy has been able to secure for itself, in regard to the actual knowledge of essences, we chose Matter for our first subject of examination : we have yet to consider the case in respect of Spirit. Those who accept the doctrine of Matter and Form as satisfactorily accounting for bodily substance, would assert that Spirit is Form without any Matter to act as a joint constituent with itself of the spiritual substance as such : though the spiritual part of man may take the place of form in regard to his corporeal part. Those who doubt the doctrine would yet have left, by way of approximations to the ultimate essence, the known characteristics of Spirit, which are that it is an inextended substance acting by means of intelligence and will, especially of intelligence, which shows itself to be perfectly self-reflective, and of will, which shows itself to be free. Then on De Morgan's principle that we can infer what a thing *is* from what it *does*, they would

assert that the phenomena of Spirit give some information about its nature or essence : what manner of substance it is appears from its manner of action.

After the above statements, the proof that we can know something of essences may be put into a short syllogism.

Those persons can know something of essences who, first, have the power of genuine intellectual abstraction from the conditions of mere sense-cognitions, so that they can know things under the form of *quiddities*, or in answer to the question, *What* are they? and who, secondly, have a genuine power of inference, whereby from the modes of its activity they can calculate the nature of an agent.

But we have these powers.

Therefore we can know something of essences.

Thus it is an approach to essential knowledge when we know why the loudness of sound decreases with the distance from its source, and can trace this diminution to the laws of vibratory propagation in an elastic medium. Again, if planetary motion is really accounted for by an initial impulse and a central attraction, that again is at least an approach to the knowledge of an essence.

It may be urged, that "the plurality of causes," or the doctrine that like effects may spring from agents differing in kind, is against any certain conclusion drawn from actions to essences. The reply is, that this obstacle not unfrequently makes itself felt, and not unfrequently it does not. The principle, if pushed to its extremes, would forbid

the certain identification of any criminal, because different individuals may present the same outside appearances. Such similarity is occasionally a bar to identification, but not always.

(3) For expressing the essences of things, there are two ways open, advertence to which will be a security against a not improbable source of confusion. We may take the constituent parts of an essence either according to physical, or according to metaphysical considerations; that is, so that the members are different in themselves, apart from any act of distinguishing thought, or so that the distinction made by our thought is not, and could not, exactly be realized outside thought. Thus, if we give body and soul as the components of man, the division is physical; if we give animality and rationality, the division is metaphysical, and the same is to be said of the distinction between a man's nature and his individuality. It is called metaphysical division inasmuch as it passes the power of the physical conditions of existence, and can be effected only by mental abstraction.

To connect what has just been laid down with what was previously said about "second intentions," we must recall how the test of the latter is, that they cannot be affirmed of objects as these exist, or might exist in themselves, but only so far as they receive a denomination proper to them as objects contemplated by the mind. An abstract nature regarded as common to several individuals is, on this criterion, a "second intention," for there is no universal *a parte rei*. When, however, we say that

the metaphysical constituents of essences can be distinguished only by the mind, and have not an actual distinction *in rerum natura*, we do not thereby debar them from being predicated in "first intention" of the wholes to which they belong. Thus we can affirm "in first intention" or of the man himself, that he has "animality" and "rationality," "nature" and "individuality." There are some who include these abstract terms under "second intentions," but we have chosen the narrower definition.

(4) We have arrived at the place where a controversy is often introduced about the distinction between essence and existence in created objects. We shall not enter into the controversy, but we cannot leave it unmentioned because it affects some of our own doctrines up and down this treatise. Essence we have already explained; and existence, though it is too elementary a notion to be rigidly defined, can be described to mean "the complement of possibility," "that whereby a thing is placed outside its causes, and has its own actual presence in the universe," "the actuality of an essence." About essence and existence these are the rough outlines of the disputation to which we wish to call attention :

(a) The controversy has no point for those who do not believe in God as the sole self-existent Being, and in finite things as receiving the whole of their Being, possible and actual, from God.

(b) There is no controversy, but full accord among the disputants, about the perfect identity

of essence and existence in God; as also about a certain sort of real distinction between any creature *in its merely possible state*, and the same creature *in its actual state*; a possible Adam is really other than an actual Adam.

(c) What is controverted is, whether *in an actually existent creature*, the actuated essence is really distinct from its existence, the former being *id quod existit* (that *which* exists), and the latter, *id quo existit* (that *whereby* it exists).

(d) The affirmers of the real distinction appeal to the fact, that only of God can it be said that existence is of His essence, and that the essence of any finite thing does not include among its constituent notes the note of existence. Opponents reply that so long as creatures are maintained to be totally created by God out of nothing, and not to have existence implied in their essence, when that essence is considered in the abstract, and metaphysically, for example, when man is considered as "rational animality;" so long the difference between the necessary existence of God and the contingent existence of anything else, is abundantly emphasized. The two sides of the question are argued respectively by Egidius, *Tractatus de Esse et Essentia*, q. ix., and Suarez, *Metaphys. disp. xxxi. sect. 4, 5, 6*. A main difficulty felt, by impugnors of the real distinction, lies in their reluctance to allow, at least in this particular case, a distinct reality which is a mere *quo* and not a *quod*—an existence which is not a *somewhat*, but only a *whereby*—the *whereby* through which the *somewhat* exists.

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) An outline<sup>1</sup> of the scholastic theory about material substance is needful to explain what has been said about our knowledge of essence, and is here presented for inspection :

(a) As a result not of a *priori* speculation, but of observed phenomena, it is contended that Matter presents a double series of manifestations; it is not only *active* but *passive*; not only *one* in its nature, but *manifold* in its extended parts; not only *special* in its own nature, but *generically common* in all natures; furthermore, it changes from one nature to another, and that by way of *transformation*, not of simple *substitution*, for there is something common to it before and after the change.

(b) To produce these opposite results it is argued that two opposite principles are required, one called *primordial matter* (*materia prima*, ἡ πρώτη ὕλη), the other *substantial form* (*forma*, *actus primus*, εἶδος, μορφή, ἐντελέχεια, ἐνέργεια). Matter is passive, indeterminate, but determinable, the principle of multiplicity, the constant under all changes; form is active, determinate and determining, the principle of unity, the variable under all substantial changes. While forms come and go, matter is the same throughout, not being liable to "corruption and generation."

(c) The opposition here is declared to be so real that the two principles must be really distinct, not as two distinct things, but as two constituents of one thing. Some scholastics indeed say that *materia prima* has a sort of incomplete entity of its own; but Aristotle's

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Phys. Lib. I. c. v.* ; *Metaphys. Lib. VIII. c. 1.*

description of it is that it has<sup>2</sup> "neither quiddity, nor quantity, nor quality, nor any of the determinants of Being." Thus in completest contrast to God, who is pure act, it is pure potentiality or determinability, wholly actuated and determined by some form, in conjunction with which alone it can exist, and towards which its one function is to serve as subject or support, and constitute with it a single Being. Hence corporeal Being results from the coalescence of the two components, neither of which could con-naturally exist apart: the form is the *primus actus*, actuating the *pura potentia*, and so giving rise to the *primum esse rei*. Each principle apart is rather *id quo aliquid est*, than *id quod est*: only the compound is *id quod est*.

The system of dynamism takes various shapes, but its tendency is to insist only upon the active or formal element, as centred at indivisible points;<sup>3</sup> whereas atomism, which also takes many shapes, in its cruder form tends to the assertion of mere passive matter-elements, upon which a certain quantity of motion has been impressed from outside, and is now handed about without change of total quantity, by some mode of transference which is left unexplained. These two are the extremes to which, however, neither of the systems need be pushed.

(2) It is impossible to disabuse the average British philosopher of Mill's delusive idea, that the doctrine

<sup>2</sup> μήτε τί, μήτε ποσόν, μήτε ἄλλο μηδὲν λέγεται οἷς ὄρισται τὸ ὄν—  
"Neque est quod, neque quantum, neque quale, neque aliud quid-  
piam eorum quibus ens determinatur." (Aristotle, *Metaphys.* vi. (al.  
viii.) c. 7.)

<sup>3</sup> A dynamist would put his own sense upon Rosmini's definition  
of substance as an energy: "Quella energia in che si fonda l'attuale  
esistenza dell' essere." (*Nuovi Saggi*, sez. x. Pt. II. c. 2.)



of real essences is one with the doctrine that each species of thing has one *ipsissima essentia* physically common to all the individuals, which are specifically what they are only by participation in this single form. But if any honest inquirer wants to satisfy his conscience on this point, let him look, if not directly at the treatment of *Essence* in the scholastic books, then at any rate at their treatment of *Universal ideas*. The same reference, especially if supplemented by a glance at what is said about the origin of ideas, will likewise satisfy him on another subject; for thus it will appear that essences are not supposed to be known *a priori* and to lead deductively to physical science, but they are inferred *a posteriori*. It would be rather a Platonist with his theory of reminiscence, than an Aristotelian, who would thoroughly chime in with Browning's verses in "Paracelsus:"

There is an inmost centre in us all,  
Where truth abides in fulness; and to know  
Rather consists in opening out a way,  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
Than in effecting entrance for a light  
Supposed to be without.

Yet this is vulgarly supposed to be the commonly accepted tenet of scholasticism. When, therefore, essence is sometimes defined as "that which is conceived first in a thing, and from which all the properties are conceived to flow," we must take "first" not in the order of time, not in the order of the acquisition of knowledge, but in the order of relationship between the several constituents of the object known. Or we must take first in the order truths, not in the order of *our knowledge* of truths.

(3) *Essence* and *nature* with the scholastics are often synonymous. *Nature* etymologically is that which a thing is, as it were by birth or genesis: thus it is a term

apt to signify the kind to which a thing belongs. But as its special signification nature means the thing on its active side: and thus Aristotle gives the definition,<sup>4</sup> "Nature is the substance or essence of things, which have in themselves, as such, a principle of motion or activity." As it is only by the activities of an object upon us that we can know it, activities for us determine its nature. Hence, subject to our own interpretation, the words of Hume, the empiricist, will suit us:<sup>5</sup> "For me it seems evident that the *essence* (or *nature*) of mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities, otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of their particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations. And though we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to their utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain that we cannot go beyond experience."

(4) Mill admits distinct "natures" in the universe, so far as he admits differences between "real kinds." But instead of explaining these after anything like the manner of *definite* essences, he has recourse to the note of *indefiniteness* for his discriminating sign: so that a definable essence, giving rise to a deducible series of properties, from the very completeness of its self-revelation, would not be a "real kind."

"There is no impropriety," writes Mill,<sup>6</sup> "in saying that of these two classifications," into real and not-real kinds, "the one answers to a much more radical dis-

<sup>4</sup> *Metaphys.* iv. c. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Treatise*, Introduction, p. 308. (Green's Edition.)

<sup>6</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. vii. § 4.

inction in things themselves than the other does. And if any one ever chooses to say that the one classification is made by nature, the other by us for our convenience, he will be right, provided he means no more than this: Where a certain apparent difference between things (though perhaps in itself of little moment) answers to *we know not what number of differences*, pervading not only their known properties, but properties yet undiscovered, it is not optional but imperative to recognize this difference as the foundation of a specific difference; while, on the contrary, differences that are *merely finite and determinate*, like those designated by the words 'white,' 'black,' or 'red,' may be disregarded if the purpose for which the classification is made does not require attention to these particular properties. The differences, however, are made by nature in both cases; only in the one case the ends of language and classification would be subverted if no notice were taken of the difference, while in the other case the necessity of taking notice of it depends on the importance or unimportance of the particular qualities in which the difference happens to consist." Thus "the *real kinds* are distinguished by unknown multitudes of properties," the *not-real kinds* "by a few determinate ones."

Mr. Bain faithfully repeats the like ideas:<sup>7</sup> "A *natural kind* is distinguished by containing not one, two, three, or four features of community, but a very large, indefinite, and, perhaps, inexhaustible number. Oxygen has a great many properties; the aggregate of all these is properly the meaning of the word." Thus an object is defined by all its ascertainable predicates, not by select essential notes. For instance, "the technically correct form of predication would be as follows: There exists in nature an aggregate of these properties—

<sup>7</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. ii. n. 7.

matter, transparency, the gaseous form, a certain specific gravity, active combining power, and so on: to which aggregation is applied the name *Oxygen*." It may be noted that to illustrate a specific definition, Oxygen is inconveniently chosen, because it is to us an irresolvable element, and can be designated only by such rather superficial marks as we have been able to discover.

(5) However much some may think such discussions obsolete, yet in his *Types of Ethical Theory*, Dr. Martineau gives us an instance of an Englishman, in the present century, still discussing the relation of Essence and Existence. His words show his disagreement with Hume's assertion,<sup>8</sup> "that the idea of existence is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent, and makes no addition to it:" so that to declare a thing existent signifies only a "certain liveliness in the idea." Dr. Martineau says, "The relation between existence and essence is perverted if the former [in created things] is treated as one of the characters that make up the latter, and may be elicited thence. Every essence is the essence of something, and needs an existence to hold and own it, and you cannot depose existence from the place of substantive priority, and send it down to do duty as a property among the factors of the essence; a property, moreover, not generally found there, but only in the special case of uncreated things. The essence of anything is that which, being posited, gives the thing, and being withheld, excludes it. But this positing may be in either of two fields. Do you say it in the field of thought? Then it may mean that your idea of essence includes your idea of existence. Do you say it in the field of fact? Then it means that the essence cannot be real

<sup>8</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. II. sect. vi.

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without the thing being real. But from the conceptual essence to the real existence there is no passage, except by the leap of a postulate. The logical constitution of our conception is assumed to be adequate security for the actual." These remarks are *à propos* of St. Anselm's argument for the existence of God as proved by the very idea of a most perfect Being. The force of the argument is discussed in *Natural Theology*, where most authors agree with Dr. Martineau that it does not suffice by itself alone, without calling in the aid of an *a posteriori* element.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THREE ATTRIBUTES OF BEING, NAMELY, UNITY, TRUTH, AND GOODNESS.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) Every Being is one: in connexion with which property various terms have to be explained. (a) Unity is transcendental, predicamental, mathematical. (b) Unity is specific and individual. (c) Unity is real or mental.
  - (d) Unity is distinguished from uniqueness. (e) Allied with unity is identity. (f) To unity is opposed distinction.
- (2) Every Being is true. (a) Establishment of the proposition.
  - (b) The truth of Being is not a reality superadded to it, but is Being itself in its relation to the intellect. (c) This relation may be made either to the creative or to the created intellect. (d) Objections do not upset the doctrine.
- (3) Every Being is good. (a) A disputed question of priority between the good and Being. (b) How and why every Being is good. (c) Not every Being is equally good, and, what is more, evil is a reality which has to be explained in harmony with the goodness of all Being as such.
  - (d) With the good is closely connected the idea of the Beautiful.
- (4) Hegelian opposition to our three attributes of Being.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

OUR work is now to assign attributes to Being, in which procedure we must be careful to assert no properties but such as belong to Being *qua* Being, and are co-extensive with the transcendental term itself, which passes over all boundaries and quite

disregards the distinction sometimes drawn between Things and Persons. Persons are Things as we are now viewing them, and Being is anything and everything that is real. The attributes of Being, then, must form no addition to its reality, they must be identical with it, not only in the sense that all the determinations of Being are themselves, through and through, Being, but also in the sense that the attributes are given by the consideration of simple Being, apart from any of its special determinations. The attributes of Being must be only Being itself, taken in one or other of its real aspects. They are Unity, Truth, and Goodness, and shall now be declared in due order.

(1) Every Being is one, an assertion which sounds like a tautology, when we consider that "every" means each taken singly, and that we are talking of Being in the singular, not of Beings in the plural. Our English indefinite article to some extent, and still more the French indefinite article *un*, enforce the recognition of the oneness: "A Being is one"—*Un être est un*.

*One* is a simple notion, irresolvable into two ideas more elementary than itself; and hence it is to be described, when not by its synonyms, then by reference to its opposite. The opposite of the oneness claimed for Being is *division*; thus oneness is said to mean indivision. \*Now some Beings are undivided in such sort that they are indivisible, which gives us the most perfect unity of a simple Being. Other Beings are undivided, yet divisible, as body and soul in man; and this is

the less perfect unity, the unity of composition, which has the higher form of unity when it is substantial as compared with accidental. How intimate is the union which the schoolmen assert in a compound substance, will not be understood by those who have before the mind only the notion of elements specially aggregated, and combining their intrinsically unchanged forces so as to produce a resultant unlike any of the single components. With the scholastics, every Being that forms a distinct nature is determined to be what it is by a *substantial form* which permeates the whole, and is, so far as its own nature alone is concerned, indivisible and without parts. Thus it constitutes a *unum per se* as distinguished from a *unum per accidens*; the unity of what is strictly a Being as distinguished from a combination of Beings. Such at least is the scholastic conception; and though its merits have not to be discussed in this place, mention of it is necessary in order to convey the full idea of what is meant by the majority of the schoolmen under the proposition, "Every Being is one." On any system, however, such as is the bond which is supposed to give unity to the compound, such also will be the unity itself which is asserted of the whole Being; while as for simple Being its unity is clear.

St. Thomas furnishes, in few words, a statement and a proof of the unity of each Being.<sup>1</sup> "The One is nothing but undivided Being, for it adds to Being only the negation of division." Being, which is thus undivided *in itself*, is also divided *from all others*

<sup>1</sup> *Quæst. Disp. de Potentia*, q. ix. a. i.



—"indivisum in se et divisum a quolibet alio." The latter part of the phrase St. Thomas thinks to be well expressed by *aliquid*, which he takes to mean "something other;" but the more correct meaning seems that of the indefinite pronoun, "something or other." His proof of the unity of Being runs thus:<sup>2</sup> "*One* is convertible with *Being*. For every Being is either simple or compound; but what is simple is undivided both as to act and potentiality; and what is compound is not a Being as long as its parts are divided, since it becomes such only when they form the compound. Manifestly, therefore, the Being of everything is undivided, and the thing keeps its Being only as it keeps its unity."

If this account of the oneness of Being should seem a mere ringing of the changes on a few simple ideas, it must be remembered that professedly we are dealing with our most elementary conceptions, in regard to which there is ample justification for laying down explicitly in synonyms their meanings and inter-relations, because experience abundantly shows what great confusion may be introduced, even among the very elements of thought. Besides, in connexion with the notion of unity, its varieties and its kindred terms call for explanation, which accordingly we proceed to give under a succession of headings. The principles which will guide our selection deserve mention. *A priori* it is always difficult to settle what connected or collateral questions are admissible into the discussion of a central idea, and what not; for as everything has

<sup>2</sup> *Sum. i. q. xi. a. i.*

some relation to everything else, it becomes possible to drag in any topic as having a sort of bearing on the main point. But experience steps in as a guide, and knowing from it what terms related with unity are of frequent recurrence in philosophical discussion, we pick out these as practically recommended to our notice. Add to this a little "sweet reasonableness," and we have all we want for guidance in making a selection.

(a) *Transcendental Unity* is nearly identical with mathematical or with predicamental<sup>3</sup> unity, but there is some distinction. The former is proper to every Being, because of its *indivision*; whereas the latter is grounded strictly on extension or quantity, which, because of its *divisibility*, gives rise to multiplicity. Hence numerical unity is the foundation of number which, when integral, consists of a progressive addition of units in this shape :

$$2 = 1 + 1$$

$$3 = 2 + 1$$

$$4 = 3 + 1$$

$$5 = 4 + 1$$

$$6 = 5 + 1$$

Hence number is defined as "multitude measured by unity," and such unity is called mathematical. Secondarily, however, and analogously numerical unity is applied to unextended objects, so that we may number angels as well as men, and speak of "the seven who stand before the throne," or of the

<sup>3</sup> It is called predicamental because quantity is one of the Aristotelian *pradicamenta*.

proportion of the faithless angels to those "faithful found." Indeed, number is said to be just one of those ideas which can be most easily fitted on to all things; from which fact certain interpreters would, in part, account for the Pythagorean attempt to treat numbers as the constituents of all objects. Mr. Bosanquet is much impressed with numerical proportion as an element in the recognition of things. "All intelligent recognition of individual objects," he says, "depends on proportion, or on some principle which involves proportion. All things have aspects and effects which find generalized expression in number. Shorten a snipe's beak, take one from the divisions of the horse-chestnut leaf, or misplace the accent on an English word, and recognition fails or falters. . . . I very much doubt if the element of proportion, both external as in size compared with surroundings, and internal as in shape, symmetry, or harmony of sound or colour, is ever absent in a recognitive perception of an individual thing."

To individuality we next turn our attention.

(b) Unity is either *specific* or *individual*; and inasmuch as the species of a thing is settled by what the scholastics call its *form*, for specific unity we sometimes read *formal*. By his *specific* unity Peter is a man, and not of any nature other than human: he can belong to only one species, not to several conjointly or mixedly. He is one nature undivided in itself and divided off from every non-human nature. On the other side, by his *individual* unity he is this particular man, and not any other member of his

own species, he is Peter, not James, or John: also he is one man only, and not both one and several together. To apply Bentham's principle, "Every man counts for one, and no man counts for more than one." Some place in opposition to *individual, essential* unity, whereby an essence cannot be divided into several essences, all of one kind: they might also call this the *specific* unity; but in the absence of uniformity among authors, we have suited our own convenience in the terms which we have chosen to use. Mentally we may distinguish individual from specific unity, as is proved by the fact we have just done so; but physically and in the concrete man, according to what seems the most reasonable view, nature and individuality are not really distinct. Still the Scotists manage to argue for a distinction here of a very diminutive yet real order—a distinction not as between thing and thing, but as between what scoffers might call *thingum* and *thingum*. Thus at least they might parody the asserted difference of *realitates* where there is no difference of *res*. What those who regard the matter seriously have to say for themselves is, that one and the same *thing* (*res*) may contain under its undivided unity *as thing*, really distinct *realitates* or *formalitates*; the test of such real distinction being a plurality of objective concepts. If, say they, to one thing we can truly apply two or more concepts of different meanings, this is a sign of some real distinction in the thing, though it may not be a sign of two really distinct things. Thus, in the case before us, an individual man is *one thing*,

but the objective concept of his individuality is not the objective concept of his humanity; the two ideas have different contents or "comprehensions;" therefore they point to some real, though subordinate, distinction in the object itself.<sup>4</sup> In reply it is argued, first, that this theory, by making the individuality really other than the nature, would make the concrete nature, as far as itself alone was concerned, a universal *a parte rei*—an absurd position;—and next, that a distinction less than real will meet all the requirements of the case. For, intermediate between the distinction which exists in the thing itself and the distinction which is constituted by mind alone with its power of abstraction, there is the distinction which the mind indeed first completes, but for which the thing itself furnishes the foundation. This is called the virtual distinction, or *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*, or the *distinctio rationis ratiocinata*,<sup>5</sup> the test of which is, that while the thing itself has not the distinction, it does give ground for it, because it offers to the mind an object of consideration to which two ideas, not mutually inclusive, can be applied. Thus, looking at any individual man, we may conceive apart his *humanity* specifically, and his *thisness* individually;

<sup>4</sup> According to the Scotist Mastrius, "Thing," *res*, is "whatever is produced by truly efficient causality, whether the product be capable of existing alone or not;" while "reality" is, "what is produced not by true physical influx, but by metaphysical resultancy, *per emanationem metaphysicam*. (*Logic*, Disp. i. q. v. a. ii.)

<sup>5</sup> See more on the subject under the heading (*f*); its anticipation, here, in a case where its aid is needed, will prepare the way for future explanation.

our two concepts are distinct, the imperfection of our faculties forcing us to do, so to speak, *at twice*, what a perfect intellect would do *at once* by an intuition of the individuality itself, along with the concrete nature with which it is identified. But we do not, therefore, with the Scotists assert that there are two realities in the thing, answering to our duality of concepts. Besides this controversy with the Scotists, there arises another with some Thomists who, not on Scotist grounds, but on the basis of their doctrine about *materia signata*, assert a real distinction between an actually existent nature, among created things and its individuality. We do not here enter into the discussion; but we are not afraid to say that we can see no intelligible sense in which a really distinct principle of individualization can be maintained. To us individuality appears identical with the concrete nature.

(c) A third division of unity is into *physical* and *mental* or *moral*. A unity is *physical* so far as it has or may have place in things, independently of the mind conceiving it: it is *mental* so far as it is not completed except by becoming the object of the mind thinking, and sometimes also of the will wishing. One form of mental unity is that which belongs to several objects because of their inclusion under one class-concept; so the members of our race are all contained under the term *man*. This is the logical unity of the universal concept. Another mental unity is often called *moral*, because its bond is in the intelligence and the will of moral

agents; who, for example, voluntarily hold together in a benevolent society, or even in civil society, so far as the latter is not due to mere physical constraint. A fighting chief sometimes keeps his tribesmen together by something more than moral ties.

(d) *Unity* is not quite *uniqueness*, though every concrete unit will be unique to this extent, that its individuality cannot be duplicated, or it would not be what it is called. But generally a thing is unique which has not got its like; if it merely has not its like but might have it, the uniqueness is a contingent fact; if it could not have its like, the uniqueness is essential, and only God is thus unique.

(e) The mention of the word "like" brings us to the discussion of similarity in its relation to identity or sameness. Occasionally we have it disputed whether we may speak of separate objects as the *same*, or of the *same* event as recurring at successive intervals. Here we deem it unnecessary, and not in accordance with generally received usage, to preserve Aristotle's distinction of *likeness* in accidental quality (*ὁμοία ὧν ἡ ποιότης μία*) from *sameness* in essential constituents (*τὰυτὰ ὧν μία ἡ οὐσία*). Therefore, we take the liberty to assert *sameness* between separate objects, on the understanding that we mean sameness whether of *kind* or of *quality*, not *numerical* sameness; and that whether it is kind or whether it is quality that is meant, must appear from the context in which the term occurs. The same numerical act can never be repeated, though some have fancied that this is possible.

by Divine power ; the same numerical object cannot be duplicated ; but specifically or qualitatively the same act can be repeated, and the same object can have its duplicate. Again, so far as a substance continues *identical with itself*, physically the same ornaments may appear at an annual celebration for many generations. As a fact, the toughest materials are sure to undergo some change from wear and tear ; but these minutiae may be disregarded, on the principle *parvum pro nihilo reputatur*, "a trifle counts for nothing." If it be urged against the continued identity of a single object, that identity is a relation, and that a relation requires two terms, we reply that on the side of the continued identity of a thing with itself, the two terms are sufficiently supplied by the existence of the one thing at different times : or even at one and the same time we may make, at least, a logical distinction between subject and predicate, and say *A* is identical with *A*. If it be further pressed upon us that identity, in the sense of likeness, is often predicated where the likeness is far from complete, the answer is that often we are satisfied with a superficial or partial likeness, as when we affirm of a certain event that it is history repeating itself. All we mean is that there are strong points of resemblance, and we are content to fasten upon these, to the neglect of perhaps equally conspicuous dissimilarities. We conclude, then, that the philosophic rule for predicating *identity* and *sameness* is not hard to discover ; the real difficulties, when they occur, will fall upon physical investigation. A moral identity is one where, according



to the common estimate, the thing, though really changed, is reputed the same, as a river, an often-mended garment, a restored cathedral.

(f) We may end the present section of our subject with an idea implied in the opposite of the notion from which we started: transcendental unity has division for its opposite, and division implies *distinction*. Distinction is defined "the absence of unity between a plurality of objects." In another shape, "those objects are *distinct*, of which one is not the other." All physically *separate* objects are evidently distinct; but there may be *real distinction* of objects where there is not actual *separation*, as between the soul and the body of a living man. Real distinction is constituted by the existence of some differentiating character, which is independent of the mind's advertence to it, and is not the creature of the mind's abstracting power. For instance, in a perfectly desert spot, which no man knows, the kernel of a nut on the tree would be really distinct from the shell, because *a parte rei*, "one is not the other." Real distinction has been subdivided into *major* and *minor*, whereupon unfortunately sharp controversies have arisen. Taking the liberty to settle our own use of terms, we may call that the *major* distinction which holds between what can be regarded as two different entities, whether these are each complete Beings in themselves or otherwise. But since it may be disputed whether every really distinct component will *ipso facto* deserve to be called an entity on its own account, we will give the alternative description,

that the *major* distinction holds between different objects, each of which has more than a merely modal existence of its own. Then the *minor* real distinction will lie between an entity and its own merely modal realities, which are described as rather entities of that entity than simple entities, and which not even by miracle could be sustained apart from their subject. As an illustration, take the terrific speed of a cannon-ball. The velocity is a modal reality which may be present or absent from the projectile, and therefore is not simply identified with it; while it exists it is an *ens entis*: it has not Being of its own, but is the mode of a Being, which can exist without it. Yet this mode is not simply nothing, or it would not make all the difference between an easily supportable weight and a destroying momentum, which hardly the strongest armour-plate can withstand. Whether between the substantial and the merely modal reality there can be enumerated an intermediate one, such as the accident of quantity, according to the scholastic conception, depends on the doctrine held about the constitution of bodies: and we shall speak of it again in the chapter on Substance.

Next to *real* let us take *mental* distinction. If it is purely of the mind's creation, it is called *distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*. To find a quite satisfactory example is not so easy; but we may instance the case of synonyms and definitions, or cases where we employ different names for one object without reference to the varying *signification* of the words, but only to their one constant

"supposition."<sup>6</sup> Thus the "supposition," or the object for which the names stand is kept the same, but the signification changes when we use the terms "moon" (the measurer), "luna" (the shining one), "our satellite," "the queen of night," "Artemis," "the silvery crescent." As etymologists teach us, names first indicate clearly a definite aspect of something: then this indication is blurred and lost; in the end, the word stands for the thing, as we say, "without a meaning." "Heavens," a person might say, is a term "standing for the sky," but telling us nothing about it; Max Müller would interpose that the word means what is "heaved up on high." After different names have grown practically synonymous, it is a *distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*, a merely mental distinction, that we place between them: "heavens," "sky," "firmament," "welkin"—they are all one in sense to the ordinary understanding. Similarly, if we take names and titles of persons, there is only a distinction *rationis ratiocinantis* between Cicero and Tully; Queen of England and Empress of India; six and half a dozen; the subject and the predicate in the identical proposition, "business is business." More importance is attached to the *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae* or *cum fundamento in re*.<sup>\*</sup> Its test, at least in all finite things, is that whereas the distinction is not found ready made in the thing as such, yet this single thing does offer to the mind the ground for

<sup>6</sup> A technical term explained in Logic. "Auld reekie" signifies an old smoky place; it stands for (*supponitur*) Edinburgh, and so far is the same with "The Athens of the North."

forming two concepts, of which one does not include the other. To recur to an example already used. This physical man is one individual nature : in him "man" and "individual" are not two different realities : yet the concept "man" is not the concept "individual:" the pair of ideas are objectively diverse, so far as each has its different meaning, though they are objectively identical so far as the two are verified in one identical object. Hence the distinction has to be established by abstraction in thought : but the thing itself is really what each of the separate predicates declares it to be.

The Infinity and the perfect simplicity of God have led to special explanations of how the virtual distinction, or the *distinctio rationis ratiocinata*, can be applied to Him ; but these we must leave to Natural Theology. To the Scotist distinction, however, we must pay a little attention, because when it previously came under our notice, we promised to give it further examination in due season. We saw that the Scotists within what, as a *thing*, is undifferentenced, profess to find actually different "realitates," which they also call "formalitates." The meaning of *formalities* here needs to be accounted for ; it will appear if we consider what it is to take a term *formally*. We take it formally when we take it *as this* or *that* thing in particular ; individuality when considered precisely *as individuality*, humanity when considered precisely *as humanity*, are taken formally : they are taken exactly in the meaning of the words according to "comprehension ;" they are considered according to the exact *form* which

determines them to be what they are as signs. At once it can be shown that, though the "individual man," Peter, is one undifferentenced object, yet the individuality, *considered formally as the individuality*, is not the humanity *considered formally as the humanity*. Hence the Scotists argue that there must be some real difference between them *a parte rei*, in the object itself: it need not be a difference between thing and thing, but at least it is a difference between a real formality and another real formality in one thing. Their opponents deny that the conclusion follows from the premisses: they affirm that our method of abstracting one aspect from another is such, that two different aspects can be taken of an object which in itself presents no real distinction of its own, to correspond with that which mentally we make. Of itself it offers to the mind a ground for drawing the distinction, but it does not do more. There is, then, a *virtual*<sup>7</sup> distinction, but there is not an *actual* one. This explanation seems intelligibly to meet all the requirements of the case; whereas the Scotist distinction between *res* and *realitas* is an enigma, which its proposers have no right to force upon our acceptance. Either they mean no more than our explanation admits, or if they do mean more the addition is unacceptable. For it would drive us to suppose, that wherever the weakness of our intelligence obliges us to conceive an object by a succession of ideas, one of which does not include the notes contained in another, there we

<sup>7</sup> This is not the "virtual intrinsic distinction" of the Thomists, into the merits of which we do not inquire.

come across some actual distinction in the object conceived. A doctrine which fits in better with a sound system of philosophy is, that what in itself is undistinguished is to us distinguishable by mental abstraction. Indeed, it gives us an insight into the nature of our minds to be made aware of the partial, piecemeal way in which we have to gather our knowledge, dividing objects which in themselves are not so divided. If it has been a fault of scholasticism to attribute over-freely to things distinctions that are but mental, the detection of this error should render us cautious in taking up too readily a doctrine like that of the Scotists. At the same time, the extreme minuteness with which the scholastics have tried to trace ascending degrees of reality in the distinctions which the intellect draws, and to mark off real from non-real distinctions, is a refutation of the charge which is sometimes made wholesale, that the scholastics rashly assumed any and every mental distinction to be also real. The fact is clearly seen to be that the scholastics were most keenly alive to the difference between the two orders, and that if they failed sometimes to apply their own terms successfully, the failure at least was not due to ignorance about the nature of abstraction.

(2) The second property of Being into which we have to inquire is its Truth. Every *cognizable* Being cannot but be truly what it is : but we may still ask, Does every Being present such a relation to intellect as to be cognizable—that is, to be a possible object of knowledge? or is there any genuine *ἄλογον*, or surd, or extra-intelligible Being? Can we give such

an account of the truth in things as to meet the Hegelian difficulty, that if we suppose material things to exist in themselves, and to furnish the data of sensation, then "we must take what is given just as it is, and have no right to ask whether and to what extent it is rational in its own nature"? Now we do hold that material things exist in themselves, and that we first come across them through the data of sense; hence we have to meet the objection, How can such objects be rational in their own nature? We shall not, however, complicate the question by taking it up from the hands of Hegel, and trying to answer his requirements. As usual, he upsets all terminology,<sup>8</sup> identifying the thing with its notion, and saying that, while it may be *correct* to say that a man is sick or is thievish, this cannot be a *truth*, for truth is the conformity of an object with its idea, or with itself, and man ought not to be sick or thievish, for thereby he departs from his proper type. Of the negative side to the question which we are asking, Must all things have in them the attribute of truth for the intellect? we find a more plain-spoken exponent in Mr. J. Cotter Morison, who at the opening of his book on *The Service of Man*, puts the inquiry: "When the human race shall have ceased to exist, would it be right to say that the truths recognized by the human mind will survive it?" And he replies, "This could only be maintained by an idealist who should place their existence in some extra-mundane eternal mind—which may be an

<sup>8</sup> Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 263.

article of faith, but not of reason." He refers to a theory, like that of the late Mr. Green, that knowledge for men consists in an appropriation by them of the contents of an eternal consciousness which has all knowledge, and communicates it in measure to individuals; that reality consists in relations, and that intellect alone constitutes these relations. Green chimes in with our principles little more harmoniously than Hegel does; so we must leave the followers of these two to shift for themselves, while we take up Mr. Morison's question solely on our own responsibilities.

(a) At the outset we have distinctly to repudiate the agnostic position in regard to the origin of our own minds and of the whole universe. Without a positive doctrine on this head we are utterly helpless before the inquiry, Must all things have about them the attribute of truth? Hence we start with the assumptions, which are no mere assumptions, but conclusions established in the treatise on Natural Theology, that there is one, primal, infinite Being, the intelligent Creator of finite Beings, who works with a perfect understanding of all He does. His own Being is to Him perfectly intelligible, and, according to exemplars which it suggests to His mind, He sees all other realizable essences or Beings. It follows at once that nothing can be literally chaotic and out of all relation to mind. Hence every Being is true, which was the proposition to be proved. It is the simplest deduction from our premisses. St. Augustine, then, is right in his remark that "the true is that which *is*," and the



delicate Orientalism which does duty for our rude phrase, "to tell a lie," has a sound philosophical basis: the liar "says the thing which is not." For whatever is, is true, and a lie asserts what is not, even when its falsehood consists in denying a fact. There is, however, an obvious difference between a false assertion and a false negation; yet this is a vanishing difference, when we choose to take advantage of our liberty to reduce all propositions alike to the form of an assertion. Thus he whose 'assertion is false, directly "says the thing which is not:" he whose negation is false indirectly "says the thing which is not." To explain the latter point, those who dislike to have recourse to the logical artifice, whereby a negation is sometimes changed, as to shape, into the affirmation of a negative predicate, may fall back upon another doctrine on which logicians dwell. They tell us how no negation stands simply as a negative: it is prompted by positive reasons, so that what we affirm is the ground of what we deny. Hence a false negation would be prompted by some implicit or explicit false affirmation. So even in negations falsehood consists in "saying the thing which is not:" and it can never be logically untrue to say the thing which is, for whatever is, is true.<sup>9</sup> However, this is not part of our essential argument, but a remark by the way.

<sup>9</sup> "A thing is called true when it is referred to the intellect according to that which it is: false when it is referred according to that which it is not." (St. Thomas, *Sum.* i. q. xvii. a. i. ad 1.) Because we are pledged to keep primarily to *ens essentialia*, with us the *isness* is primarily essential, not evidential.

A few words from St. Thomas will emphasize our proof that every Being is true, though indeed there is little left to prove, after we have started with the supposition that the infinitely intelligent God is the Author of all things, possible and actual, "Because," writes the holy Doctor,<sup>10</sup> "all things are naturally referred to the standard of the Divine intellect, as works of art are referred to the laws of production in that art; it follows that everything is to be denominated true according as it has its proper form, which is the copy of the idea in the mind of the Great Artificer." Therefore, as God fails in none of His own immediate works, all things, inasmuch as they come from Him, are true; and, as we shall be imperatively called upon to explain later (under the heading c), even deformities in nature are still true. A little higher up in the same passage St. Thomas had remarked that all things, so far as they themselves are concerned, are at least potentially true in reference to our intellect also; not as to the master-mind which gives the rule of its own productions, but as to the observer's mind, upon which objects are apt to produce a true impression of themselves.

By way of contrast with the command which our Theistic position gives us in arguments like the above, we may note how ridiculous it would be for Mill, on his system, to pronounce every Being true: nor does he fall into the absurdity. There is for him no known type of intellect which is universal:

<sup>10</sup> In Lib. I. *Peri Herm.* L. iii. Cf. *Quæst. Disp. de Veritat.* q. i. a. viii.

there is no necessary, eternal truth: every part of our knowledge is as relative as our mere sensations, so that just as it would be preposterous to say, Every object must be perceptible to one of our senses, in like manner it is preposterous to say, Every object must present an intelligible aspect. We, on the contrary, deriving all the ultimate possibilities and natures of things from an eminently intelligent and intelligible source, feel secure in our assertion that every Being must have its truth as Being, or its ontological truth. It cannot consist of contradictory constituents: it must truly be the sort of thing which it is, and therefore it presents a rational object of thought. This we can safely maintain on condition that we have got a correct theory about the nature of thought itself; but those who follow Hume's principles in relation to the understanding of man, are hopelessly shut out from all science of Ontology. Unwarrantably enough, Hume himself equivalently teaches that all Being is true; for he regards it as a test of the intrinsic possibility of a thing, that it should involve no self-contradiction. But what is the absence of self-contradiction in a positive object, except the presence of some truly conceivable nature?

Ontology, however, is content to stop short at the declaration that every Being is true, without attempting to describe how this truth makes itself manifest to us; for it belongs to Psychology to discuss the origin of ideas. Our proposition, therefore, does not commit us to various theories which different people may fancy necessary to the

support of our view, because such would be their way of interpreting our utterance, if they had to defend its words. For example, we do not consider ourselves bound to animate all objects for the purpose of rendering them more apt to communicate a knowledge of themselves to us: nor do we consider ourselves bound to endow all objects with at least some sort of obscure intelligence, on Schelling's principle, that "what is destitute of understanding cannot be an object of understanding," that what has not got some share of logical truth, cannot have ontological truth.<sup>11</sup> We have not, in this treatise, to prove that there are mere material things, without a spark of intelligence in them; but we may be allowed to complete our proposition that every Being is true, by a brief statement of the principles from which we enter upon the present inquiry.

Our view as to the identity and the difference between thought and thing is this: (i.) In God, who is the substantial thought, the two are identical, when it is His own Being which is the object of His knowledge: God is identically the infinite Object and the infinite Knowledge, and it is false to call Him the infinite Idea to the exclusion of His substantiality. When, however, God knows any

<sup>11</sup> See the systems of Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hegel, Green, &c. The last named says, "Every effort fails to trace a genesis of knowledge out of anything which is not, in form and principle, knowledge itself." (*Prolegomena Ethica*, p. 75.) Beneke thinks that Schleiermacher discovered a fundamental truth in Metaphysics, when he observed that *living* objects are the first to be perceived by the senses.

created object, such object is not identical with His knowledge. (ii.) When man knows himself thought and thing are not identical, because man's knowledge is an act of the "accidental" order, and is not simply identified with his substance, least of all with his bodily substance: it is a real mode that comes and goes. (iii.) In an angel the case must be judged by doctrines, upon which we have not to enter. (iv.) When man knows an object as really distinct from himself, then such object is neither substantially nor accidentally identical with him, but is another thing. Here is our position against the idealism which would say that thought is the only reality: nothing is simply thought and no more, while some things are quite devoid and even incapable of thought.

(b) When we teach that truth is a property of all Being we do not insinuate that truth is a reality over and above the reality of Being; rather it is Being itself in relation to intellect.<sup>12</sup> Every Being really presents an intelligible relation; so that while its truth is no superadded reality, it is real with the reality of Being. It is not a mere negation, though like other positive properties it may be described negatively, and is so described by Carleton, who places the truth of a thing in that whereby it is opposed to mere seeming or false appearances. "I like the view of Aureolus," he writes, "which is the opinion of

<sup>12</sup> So important is this relation to intellect that St. Thomas says truth has its denomination primarily from the intellect. "Verum dicitur per prius de intellectu et per posterius de re intellectui adæquata." (*Quæst. Disp. Veritat. q. a. ii. ad 1.*)

many others, that transcendental truth consists in the fact that Being gives us ground for denying the bare semblance of Being. For as Being is opposed to non-Being, so Being as true is opposed to Being as simply apparent." He allows, nevertheless, the tenability of the opinion upheld by Suarez and others, that the truth of Being is its *knowableness*—"ut idem sit verum ac *ens cognoscibile*:" and this seems the more radical account of the matter. To define truth by its opposition to mere seeming, is better indeed than the device of Heraclitus, who describes truth as that which is not hidden, τὸ μὴ λήθον; but truth, as a positive property of Being, is best explained to consist in the fact, that every Being must stand in the relation of a possible object for intellectual perception. Thus truth is Being as related to mind, a relation which no Being can be without.

(c) To the Creative Mind every truth of Being must be actually and always known; but to the created mind the knowableness need not be more than potential, and need be even that only under an explanation. For if some objects, except in their highest generalities as things or substances, remained for ever beyond the power of knowledge communicated, as a fact, to creatures, no objection could be raised; but it would always remain possible that such objects should become, in some measure, intelligible to created faculties more highly endowed, whether naturally or supernaturally. Thus the knowledge would be beyond possibility to actual creatures, but not simply beyond all possibility of creatable creatures.

The relation of ontological truth to finite mind is such that the former gives the rule to which the latter has to conform ; the position is that of measure to measure-taker ; and all that a creative genius among men can do is to dispose the given elements in conformity to the requirement of their own laws. *Obediundo imperat* : it is by submission that he rules. And even God Himself does not simply make truth by thinking it, and by thinking it as He likes : He too conforms, but His conformity is not a real subjection. For it means only that His intellect, as we mentally distinguish it from His essence, takes its rule from His essence, with which it is "really" identified, though "formally" it is not so : that is, His intellect, "formally" *qua* intellect, is not His essence, "formally" *qua* essence.

Another difference in the relationship of the Divine and of the created intellect to the truth of things is observable in the fact, that the human artist may quite fail in executing what he has conceived, or may get puzzled over the very formation of the conception ; whereas no such failure besets the action of the Almighty. If some of His works never attain their normal perfection, if in nature there are abortions and monstrosities and frustrated processes, all this follows from interference or want of co-operation between the several secondary agencies ; all this the Creator fully foresaw and permitted, as regards every consequence actual and possible. So explained, nature's widest departure from right order is not a falsification of the Divine ideas. These ideas are, as they are called, *prototypic*,

and that character none of the miscarriages in the universe destroy. The very strife of things follows according to law, and might absolutely be deduced beforehand from the data. There is, however, something specially exceptional in free transgression of the moral law, whereby man departs from "true" conduct, in the sense in which Scripture calls all virtue truth and all sin a lie. Such departure from the type is not calculable from the physical data, it is no mathematical sequence; it is the nearest approach to an upsetting of our proposition in its universality, "All being is true," yet it does not succeed in the overthrow. The above statements are sufficient to meet the difficulties; but a refutation of these latter might be made by taking them higher up in the principles of Metaphysics. We are dealing with Being as Being, as *ens essentialia*, with Being also as it is one. Now Being so taken is always some one essence as such; and this cannot but be true to its own nature, and therefore to the Divine ideas. Whatever untruth comes in will be due to relationships between different Beings, even though these latter be only the different parts, constituting a compound Being. But any Being considered as an essence is necessary,<sup>13</sup> eternal, and immutable. It cannot suffer change of itself without ceasing to be that Being; hence it is of its own nature *true*, and we will add *good* also. For this is the attribute which we have next to consider, and the consideration of which will throw fuller light on what we have just said. It is convenient before we

<sup>13</sup> Under the limitations stated in the chapter on Possibilities.



begin the explanation of goodness to have had occasion to point out how, in assigning attributes to Being, we are primarily concerned, not specifically with the determinations of Being and their inter-relations, but with Being in general as *ens essentialis*. Our inquiry has first taken this shape. Is Being, regarded as such, One and True? And having settled these two points in the affirmative, we have next to go on with the investigation, Is each one and true Being also good? can it, as Being, ever be pronounced bad? However, before plunging into the deep question about goodness, we will put an end to that about truth, by showing how to dispose of what may be estimated as one of the prime difficulties against our doctrine.

(d) It is a fact which is ever being dinned into our ears, that the world in which we live is a deceitful world, a world of false appearances, and this even in the physical order.

The smoothest seas will oft-times prove  
To the confiding bark untrue;  
And if man trust the skies above,  
They can be treacherous too.

But more than this—and here is the point with which we wish to deal—in the world of commerce, all is declared to be “shoddy,” and “pinchbeck,” and “Brummagem.” Hence a mercantile man, whose life-long experiences of the tricks of trade have inclined him to regard the world as a large market for the sale of spurious articles under the guise of genuine, or at least for passing things off as other than what they exactly are, may quote his own

knowledge as dead against the proposition that "every Being is true." His mistake is simply about the meaning of the words : taken as they are intended by us, the words of our proposition merely assert the plain fact that everything is just what it is, not that everything is just what a vendor would have it thought to be, or tries to make it appear to be. The most adulterated or counterfeit article thus preserves its ontological truth ; and so does even a lying utterance. For the liar thinks what he does think, and says what he does say, though he deliberately says other than he thinks. There is moral untruth, but not ontological.

(3) (a) Goodness, as a property of Being, is apt extremely to puzzle the young student, because of the apparent trickishness of the notion. When he handles it for a length of time together, it is perpetually slipping through his fingers ; and when he picks it up again it often seems to have changed its shape. But most perplexing of all is it when he comes across the doctrine that to regard goodness as a property of Being is to reverse the right order of concepts ; that goodness is the most fundamental of all, and that upon it Being rests as a sort of attribute. About this theory it will be useful to say a few words, in the course of which it will be necessary to bear in mind, how easily, since Being, its Unity, its Truth, and its Goodness are all the same thing under different aspects, their relative positions can be altered by changing the point of view ; and the chief question is whether some of these changes are not too violent to meet with our approval.

As a variation upon the procedure of the Eleatics, who made fixed Being the only reality and denied the changeable to be real, Euclid and the Megaric school<sup>14</sup> put the good in place of Eleatic Being, and said that it was the one, constant, immutable element. "The Megarics," writes Cicero,<sup>15</sup> "affirmed that alone to be good which is one, and like, and always the same," *οἷον, ὁμοιον, ταὐτόν*. No exact system can be gathered from their teachings, and they are mentioned merely as instances of those who regarded good as the most radical notion. Plato<sup>16</sup> often tends towards the same doctrine in which he is followed by various Platonizers. St. Thomas thinks it worth his while to state and answer the difficulty which he finds in the fact, that the Pseudo-Dionysius<sup>17</sup> seems to place the Good, as a Divine name, before Being. Scotus Erigena, however, is one of the boldest assertors of the pre-eminence of *good* above *essence*: he says, "Not only those things which are, are good, but even those which are not, are called good. Nay, the things

<sup>14</sup> Zeller's *Socrates and Socratic Schools*, c. xii. p. 222.

<sup>15</sup> *Acad.* iv. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Specimens occur in the *Republic*, Bks. VI. and VII. The Socratic school gave such prominence to the moral element, that it naturally fell into the doctrine that "the good" stands first in the order of reality.

<sup>17</sup> *Sum.* i. q. v. a. ii. The idea of extending the *good* beyond Being is connected by Egidius with curious etymology. "A thing is called *bonum* from *boare*, which means to call; and this is the reason why the good is a term of wider extent than Being." The explanation may be seen, *Dist.* xxvii. *quest.* ii. *art.* i. *Resolutio*. St. Thomas, Erigena, and Egidius all refer to the fact that mere possibilities, inasmuch as they are objects of desire, are good.

which are not, are called much better than the things which are; for in so far as they transcend essence they approach to the superessential good," that is God, whom Erigena styles, *Nothing*; "but in so far as they participate of essence, they are separated from the superessential *Good*."

If, however, we find the good in various ways put at the root of Being, the like, to some extent, is observable of the One and the True. Plotinus takes as his starting-point the *One* or the *Good* indifferently, but not Being (τὸ ὄν); and those whose tendency it is to regard thought as that which constitutes the order of things, will incline to make truth fundamental, and to reverse in some degree Plato's maxim that Being is the measure of thinking.<sup>18</sup> Parmenides<sup>19</sup> identifies the thought and the thing; and in Kantian or Hegelian language, we are told<sup>20</sup> that "to say that the real world is the intelligible world, is to say that reality is something at which we arrive by a constructive process," that is, the mind in some way makes its own reality or truth.

St. Thomas had dealt with the question whether we should regard Being as more fundamental than the good; and his reply is that<sup>21</sup> "in the order of reason, Being is prior to the good. For Being is the first object which the mind conceives, because

<sup>18</sup> λόγος, ὃς ἂν τὰ ὄντα λέγῃ ὡς ἔστιν, ἀληθής, ὃς δ' ἂν ὡς οὐκ ἔστι, ψευδής. (Plat. *Rep.* v.)

<sup>19</sup> τῷ ὄντι δ' ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα. (Quoted by Ueberweg, *Logic*, p. 25.)

<sup>20</sup> Bosanquet's *Logic*, p. 248.

<sup>21</sup> *Sum.* i. q. v. a. ii.

it is precisely that according to which a thing is cognizable: everything is cognizable inasmuch as it is *in act*," inasmuch as it is not merely potential but actual. It is only from the actual that the potential can be known; never can it be known directly from itself. It will be observed that St. Thomas is speaking rather of *ens existentiae* than of *ens essentialis*; rather of Being the participle, than of Being the noun: whereas we, for the sake of clear consistency throughout our exposition, must speak of *ens essentialis* when we defend the truth of all Being. Nevertheless, we may adopt his language and make it our own. For, whether we speak of existence, or whether we speak of essence in its widest sense of a *somewhat* capable of receiving existence, in either case we can apply the maxim, which, referring to priority not of time but of nature, says, *Prius est esse quam esse tale*—"To be at all is a more fundamental conception than to be this or that." On which principle *Being* is more fundamental than being *good*; or *Being* is the subject and goodness is its attribute. Of course the two are one identical reality; but in the order of mental distinction we have a valid reason for choosing to regard the mental relation of one to the other in the light under which we have considered the case. At the same time we do not deny to others the possibility of taking the two words, Being and Goodness, as practically synonymous, and even of using the expression that a certain amount of *goodness* or perfection is what is necessary to constitute a Being, or is a condition of Being. At the

same time we claim for ourselves the right to rest satisfied with the order given by St. Thomas.<sup>22</sup> "The intellect first apprehends Being itself; next, it apprehends its own knowledge of Being; and thirdly, its own *appetition*<sup>23</sup> of Being; therefore the succession of ideas is, Being, Truth, Goodness." It will be observed that *oneness*, which is estimated on a different ground, is omitted in the enumeration. After these few remarks on a frequently raised question of priority, we must now inquire how and why every Being is good.

(b) By a sort of cross-division we might take the intellect as understanding the act of volition, and the will as willing the act of intellect. Thus truth would be referred not only to intellect, but also to will, and goodness would be referred not only to will, but also to intellect. But it is here found convenient that we should keep to one reference at a time; on which supposition Being, in relation to intellect, has just been shown to be true, and we have next to prove that Being in relation to appetite or will is good. Plato, in the Sixth Book of his *Republic*, says that "the good is the object which all pursue, and for the sake of which always they act;" in correspondence with which words, Aristotle, towards the beginning of his *Ethics*, describes the good as the object of all appetite.<sup>24</sup> No small confusion is introduced

<sup>22</sup> *Sum* i. q. xvi. a. iv.

<sup>23</sup> St. Thomas, I. q. xxx. a. i. ad. 3, defines appetite to be "the inclination and ordination of a thing to what is suitable to it."

<sup>24</sup> καλῶς ἀπεφάνησαν τὰγαθόν, οὐδὲ πάντα ἐφίεται. (Ar., *Eth.* I.)

into the subject, because of the variety of aspects under which we can regard the good as appetible, and because of the great tendency to slide inadvertently from one point of view to another. It is well, therefore, that we should, at the outset, explicitly direct our attention to four conceivable aspects. Each Being taken in itself, according to its own nature as an *ens essentialæ*, has a certain degree of perfection which constitutes its intrinsic goodness. Now (1) if this Being is intelligent, it can appreciate its own goodness, and make it the term of an act of approval by the will; if, however, the Being is non-intelligent (2) we can regard its goodness as becoming an object of disinterested approval in the will of an intelligent contemplator, who wishes the thing to have the perfection which it possesses; or (3) by endowing the thing with a sort of metaphorical will, we can imagine it as pleased with its own degree of perfection. Hitherto we have been taking the thing always as *bonum sibi*, good in its own regard; we can further take it (4) as *bonum alteri*, good in regard to something really other than itself. These are four aspects which are often usefully distinguished.

Occasionally, another principle of distinction proves convenient. Every good is *bonum alteri*, good to another: but this otherness may be merely logical, and then it corresponds to the *bonum sibi* of the first division; or it may be *bonum alteri*, in the sense of real otherness. We might stop short here: but a few subdivisions of the second member which are easily intelligible, will add clearness to

future details. The real otherness is greatest when we have two distinct substances, one helpful to the other: it is not so great when one substantial part of the same body helps another, or helps the whole body: it is least when it is only an accidental quality or disposition which perfects the substance to which it belongs. Bread is good for man; his own eyes are good for man; the movements gone through in exercise are good for man: these examples illustrate the successive degrees. With the above distinctions to guide our thoughts, as to the possible terms of reference towards which a thing may be said to be good, we may proceed to establish our proposition, which is, that every Being is good.

So much Being as each thing has, so much perfection *cæteris paribus* must it have; and this perfection is good in itself.<sup>25</sup> Here is a more infallible rule than Falstaff's, "The more flesh, the more frailty." Therefore, if presently we can make ourselves secure about that *cæteris paribus*, as we shall be able to do in the explanations which follow, every Being is proved to be *bonum sibi*, or good as taken absolutely in itself: and it may be viewed in any of the three aspects mentioned in the first of our two tables of division.

Furthermore, there is no Being that cannot discharge some good office in regard to something

<sup>25</sup> "Good is the perfection which exists in anything, with the connotation of some capacity, inclination, or natural tendency of the thing for that good." (Suarez, *Metaphys.* Disp. x. sect. i. n. 18.) He is speaking precisely of the *bonum sibi*.



else: which shows that every Being is likewise *bonum alteri*, good as taken relatively to another—to something which is really, and not only logically another. As Hooker puts it, "All things, God alone excepted, besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive some perfection from other things." It is not affirmed that everything is good in regard to everything else, or good in every respect even to anything else; it is maintained only that every Being has some use in regard to something else, as when rubbish serves our purpose of filling up a hole, or pain warns a man off from what would prove utter destruction to his life. A new manufacture occasionally gives a market-value to what before was unsaleable. If, therefore, we illustrate our proposition from the region of matter alone, we can put the case compendiously, by reference to what is given in last chemical analysis. There we find matter ultimately made up of certain elements which we cannot alter; each of these has a definite nature of its own, that is, a certain perfection or goodness in itself; each, moreover, is capable of entering into relation with some others for an end which is good. What combinations are good and what not, must be judged by the purposes which are helped or hindered in the several instances; and what is bad under one aspect, will generally be found good under another. Yet this does not put even relative good and bad on a par, and making it as philosophical to say, "Every Being is bad," as to say, "Every Being is good." No doubt any finite Being may enter into relations which are bad for

itself or for another : nevertheless, badness is never Being as such, nor the mere natural tendency of Being as such.

We have been using perfection as synonymous with Being, and the right so to do needs a word of explanation. The *perfect* is, etymologically, that which is fully made, or is a thorough piece of work ; in this sense it cannot apply to God. But when the perfect is described as, "that which wants nothing of all that is proper to its nature," then God also may be called perfect. Being is perfection because it is either a complete nature, or something which contributes towards the completion or the adornment of some nature.

The doctrine that every Being is good sounds very odd to some, who fancy that there must be jugglery in the words, and that, perhaps, "good for nothing," or "good for doing mischief," is included under good ; therefore we will rehearse the whole teaching in the authoritative language of St. Thomas. He lays it down that as truth is what intellect tends to, so goodness is what the will or appetite tends to ; yet with this difference, that whereas *the true* is so denominated primarily from the intellect, *the good* is so denominated primarily from the thing.<sup>26</sup> Each of the two properties, however, is adequately denominated only by reference to both faculty and object. As regards the faculty of *appetition*, he distinguishes the appetite roused and guided by knowledge (*appetitus elicitus*) from the appetite in a lower sense (*appetitus*

<sup>26</sup> Sum. i. q. xvi. a. i.

*naturalis*), namely, the tendency<sup>27</sup> of everything towards that which is suitable to its nature. Under this wide sense of "appetite" he defines the Good, in most general terms, as that which gives perfection, either complete or partial, to a thing, and so is *appetible*. "*Good* has for its meaning *perfection*, and the perfect is the object of appetite."<sup>28</sup> Rather, however, than say with some modern evolutionists, that a thing is good because it is appetible, St. Thomas would say that a thing is appetible because it is good—a principle which would allow for acquired appetites, and the effects of custom. For each Being has a perfection suitable to its own nature, towards which perfection certain other things are of themselves conducive; this perfection and this conduciveness form their goodness, and on their goodness follows their appetibility.<sup>29</sup> Thus of the two definitions, *Bonum est quod alicui convenit*—"Good is what is suitable to some Being," and *Bonum est quod alicui appetibile est*—"Good is what is appetible by some Being," the latter is best regarded as consequent on the former, and not the other way about. When, however, it is said *alicui bonum*, *alicui appetibile*, the "otherness" which is required between that which is good and that to which it is good, need not always amount to a real distinction; a mental or logical distinction will suffice. Because there always is some otherness real or logical, goodness is to that extent always relative: but as the logical otherness

<sup>27</sup> *Sum.* i. q. lxxviii. a. i. ad 3, et alibi passim.

<sup>28</sup> *Sum.* i. q. v. a. i. ad 1; *Quæst. Disp. Veritat.* q. xxxi. a. i.

<sup>29</sup> *Quæst. Disp. Veritat.* q. xxi. a. ii.

is not real, the goodness with which it is concerned may be called *absolute* (*bonum sibi*), by comparison with the other kind of goodness (*bonum alteri*), which is therefore termed especially *relative*. Of course in its fullest sense *absolute goodness* means goodness without alloy or limit—infinite goodness, just as absolute perfection means infinite perfection; still finite natures have each their absolute goodness and perfection, so far as they have all that properly belongs to them. The only difficulty is that often we cannot precisely fix what a “nature” is; but that difficulty belongs to some special science, not to General Metaphysics. In the case of absolute goodness, then, according to our present use of the phrase, a thing has, or may be imagined to have, a sort of complacency in that which it is; for, says St. Thomas, “everything already in possession of Being, naturally likes that Being, and preserves it to the best of its power.”<sup>30</sup> Contrasted with this good of rest in an end attained (*in fine quiescere*), is the other good which is tended to as an end yet to be attained (*tendere in finem*).<sup>31</sup> Or good may be divided into the good which a thing has, the good which it wants to acquire for itself, and the good which it seeks to diffuse to others. If in the case of material things this *wanting*, or *seeking*, or *appetite* is only figurative, St. Thomas justifies the metaphor by usage, quoting Boethius, who says: “Providence has given to created things this chief principle of permanence, that, as far as they can, they have a *natural desire* to persist in Being; wherefore you can

<sup>30</sup> *Quæst. Disp. Veritat.* q. xxi. a. ii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

in no way doubt *that all things whatsoever have a natural tendency to seek their own continuance and to avoid destruction.*"<sup>32</sup> We may add the words of a yet higher authority, St. Paul:<sup>33</sup> "The expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God; for the creature was made subject to vanity, not wittingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject in hope. But the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that *every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain till now.*" In the broad sense, then, of the words *desire* and *appetite*, every Being, according to St. Thomas, seeks after good: every Being is good, and actively tends to good, for every Being in itself, and every activity in itself, constitute or effect some perfection—some nature or some energy which as such cannot but be good. Thus Manichæism as a theory is quite excluded.

The security of the whole doctrine, as expounded on our own chosen plan, consists in resting it upon Being as *Ens Essentiæ*; no *Ens Essentiæ*, whether substantial or accidental, can be otherwise than good as an *Ens Essentiæ*. St. Thomas puts the point thus,<sup>34</sup> "Every essence is natural to some thing or other. Because, if it is in the order of substances, then it is the very nature itself; if it is in the order of accidents, it must follow from some substantial principle, and so be natural to its own substance, even though to another substance it

<sup>32</sup> *De Consolat.* Lib. III. prosa xi. vers. fin.

<sup>33</sup> Rom. viii. 19—23.

<sup>34</sup> *Contra Gentes*, iii. 7.

may not be naturally adapted. Whereas something evil in itself could be natural to nothing; for it is the character of evil to be the privation of something native to an object, or due to it; but the privation of what is natural to an object, cannot be natural to anything. Hence what is natural to a thing is its good if it is present, its evil if it is absent. Thus no essence is in itself bad."

(c) The doctrine that every Being is good is not the same as the false doctrine, sometimes conveyed by writers like Walt Whitman, that every Being is equally good; nor with the other false doctrine that there is no real evil in the world. It is only a pseudo-philosophy which can pretend to be so reverential for facts as to consider every fact equally sacred, and to pronounce a life primarily devoted to discovering facts about the structure of one tiny insect well spent, indeed better spent, than a life primarily devoted to the study of theology, where facts are less manifest to the senses. On this theory, a man who was so busy with his microscope that he had no time even to inquire about religion, would be put down as deserving a happy futurity, if unexpectedly he should find himself existing after death and confronted with God as his Judge. Our doctrine, while it pronounces every Being good with a perfection of its own, recognizes different degrees of perfection according to the rank of the several Beings which make up a gradational or hierarchical universe. Next and more important still is our assertion, that not only are some Beings less

perfect than others, but that there is real evil to be met with in the world. The equal mind with which some artists, who call themselves "realists," profess to view all things, is bad enough in art; it is worse as an explicit philosophy. Of art we are told,

With equal feet she treads an equal path,  
Nor recks the goings of the sons of men;  
She hath for sin no scorn, for wrong no wrath,  
No praise for virtue and no tears for pain.

Asserting that good and evil are two contraries and that both are to be found side by side, what we have yet to explain is that which the schoolmen call the precise *formality* of evil—namely, the character wherein exactly its badness consists. The said schoolmen have entered minutely into the question, investigating not merely bad things, but the precise reason why things are bad.

We may begin by taking it as clear that there cannot be a thing wholly evil, but that there is always "some soul of goodness in things evil;" the more correct expression for which would be, "some badness in things good." For as the axiom has it, *malum est in bono subjecto*, every instance of evil must be found in a subject which of its own nature is good. Bacon's saying that "Being without well-being is a curse," cannot be taken to mean that well-Being is a real addition to Being, without which it would have no desirableness. As we have already shown, Being as Being must be good: so that it is not the good that is the character to be accounted for with difficulty, but the evil. How into good Being can evil be introduced? and what is it when intro-

duced? The scholastics reply not that the whole evil thing, but that just precisely its *badness*—the *malitia* which is in the *malum* and constitutes it *malum*—is never a positive entity, but always some privation of positive entity *in subjecto bono*, that is, in an entity which, as such, is good. Our task then is to show; that badness can in every instance be regarded as a “privation,” which is defined to be “the absence of a perfection which is by nature due to some subject.” Not to see is in man a privation, and is called blindness; not to see in a stone is a mere negation, and is not properly called blindness.

As we divided *good* into absolute and relative, so we will apply the same division, as far as the nature of the case will allow, to *bad*. Thus we get the following heads: (1) A simple substance admits of no absolute evil in itself as a substance; for it is a definite nature, good in itself, which simply either exists or does not exist; and the only evil it can allow of would be in its accidents, as, for example, when an angel puts forth a perverse act of will, sins, and is afflicted with punishment. (2) A compound substance, because it is made up of parts, is more liable to evil. For if we take these parts according to the rough division of distinguishable members, it is clear that a limb may be missing, or out of its proper position, or distorted in shape. But if we go deeper into the question, then on the scholastic theory of matter and form even in compound substances, no evil can be rigorously substantial; for the schoolmen regard every com-



pound substance as due to a single indivisible form, which gives determination to matter otherwise quite indeterminate. According to this supposition the evil would not be in the essential substance: it could only affect the accidental parts. If, however, we may take a rougher estimate of compound substances, we can say that in it *relativo-absolute* badness is possible. We call it relativo-absolute not for any recondite reason, but simply because it is relative inasmuch as it is due to the bad relationships of parts, which are ill-arranged, or misshapen, or have some of their number wanting, while it is absolute inasmuch as it affects the thing regarded in itself, and not merely in reference to other things. In the last place (3) there is evidently *relative* badness between thing and thing, inasmuch as one destroys the perfection of another. Thus on a complete survey it will appear the evil always arises from some relation, either between the accidents of a substance and their subject, or between substantial parts within the same subject, or between different subjects. Therefore the question now takes the shape, how can evil arise out of the relations of Beings? If each Being, as such, is good, if all the accidents and activities of Being in themselves are good, how from these elements can evil originate? How can we have in the consequent what is not given in the several antecedents?

We must fall back upon first principles. God is the very Being, *ipsissimum ens*, which implies the exclusion of all imperfection. Therefore Being in itself, and in its plenitude, is nothing but perfection.

Creatures, however, as the Fathers of the Church sometimes put it, are made up of Being and not-Being—an expression which may be much misapprehended. It would be a gross blunder to regard this not-Being as a positive component; it stands for the limitations of Being. If we may borrow an illustration from another treatise, it is there shown that error never comes of intelligence as such: there is no intelligence which is strictly erroneous, and the intelligence of error can mean only the detection of error, which is a knowledge of truth. Error, however, though not springing from intellect, is rendered radically possible by the limitations of intellect. What is impossible to infinite knowledge is possible to finite understanding. Similarly, evil has its root, not in Being, but in the limitations of Being. Error and evil are not mere limitations, but they supervene upon limitations. What supervenes in the case of evil is a relative unsuitableness between two or more objects that are brought into some sort of connexion, which they are incapable of forming without detriment to one or all of the members.

An example will best show how evil so brought about can be reduced to the idea of a privation, however positive it may at first sight seem in itself. To be fair, we will not choose an instance of the more negative order, but distinctly of the positive kind, so far as that can be. Some disease germs appear to take no hold on the human body, unless there is what physicians call the appropriate morbid diathesis, or the appropriate *nidus*; in which case

we should already have evil existing before the precise point of time at which we want to suppose it being produced; for there would be a bad predisposition. But there are poisons that will destroy the healthiest frames, and we might take their action for an illustration; it will, however, be more convenient if we imagine some fungoid growth, which could be started at pleasure on the surface of any human body. Upon the healthy flesh, then, the foreign growth is supposed to be introduced, and begins to feed on its substance. It is common to call such fungoid matter itself the disease or the evil; but strictly this is not so, for it is rather the cause of the evil which is in the man, not in it; it thrives and is well, the man wastes away and is ill; it, so to speak, triumphs, and man is defeated. The evil, then, is in man, and is reducible to a privation in that he has not the flesh which he ought to have, or the nutriment for it which he ought to have, or the composition and disposition of its parts which he ought to have; for an alien organism has robbed him of his natural due. Similarly, cancer eats away the human flesh; it is itself healthy, prosperous and figuratively happy, while man is diseased, unprosperous, and literally unhappy, because of an evil which consists in a privation of proper structure in the part affected. But, it is urged, suppose we introduce into the human system not a germ that thrives on man's substance, but some mineral matter that simply obstructs the way. If a child swallows a plaything that sticks in the throat, stops the breathing, and produces death, how is there

privation in this case? Again, the evil is not in the plaything: at least, we may suppose that to be neither better nor worse in itself, for its novel situation; but the evil is that the lungs suffer privation of fresh air, the blood, deprived of its proper constituents, fails to do its proper work, and so privation upon privation succeeds, till the child is deprived of the vital conditions and dies. The mere positive presence of the obstruction would not kill; the mere positive presence of carbon in the blood would not kill, unless something positive were taken away which was necessary for life. Some foreign substances are lodged in man's body, but because they stop no vital function which ought to go on, they do not produce evil. No man dies of a simple addition to his body, which effects no subtraction. Whence it appears that the agent from which evil proceeds may be, and even must be, positive; its effect may be, and even must be, positive, so far as no positive activity can result in simple nothingness or annihilation; nevertheless, the badness, *ipsa malitia*, is never the positive Being as such, but some privation of Being. The evil in the bullet-wound is neither the mass of lead, nor the blood that soaks the earth, nor the flesh which is torn, nor the veins which are opened; all these, so far as they are positive entities, are good; the evil in them is reducible to privations of several kinds—privations of all those conditions which ought to be there and are not. If this doctrine should still be doubtful to the reader because he has difficulty in distinctly tracing evil to its form of a priva-

tion, he may satisfy himself indirectly in this way. He can convince himself of the propositions, that all Being as such is good; that spilt blood, lacerated flesh, flesh putrified and dissolved into less complex compounds, have, as entities, their own perfection; next, he can convince himself that evil is not a mere negation; and lastly, he can draw the conclusion that badness in itself, since it is neither entity as such, nor non-entity as such, must be something intermediate, namely, a privation. Here is a doctrine which might seem a useless refinement; but in the days of the Manichean controversy, it proved very serviceable in the hands of the Fathers, who had to show that no original Principle of Evil need be postulated as coeval with the Principle of Good, in order to account for what is bad in the world.

Suarez develops the argument in the eleventh disputation of his *Metaphysics*. He fully admits that<sup>35</sup> "a positive form can be in disagreement with a subject, and to be in disagreement with another is the same thing as to be evil. As, therefore, the good, in the sense of what agrees with another, means no more than the perfection of one thing, along with the implied signification of something else, such that the said perfection is suitable or due to it; so the bad which is the opposite of the good, has for its precise meaning nothing else than the perfection of one thing, along with the implied signification of something else, such that the said perfection is in disagreement with it, or is repugnant

<sup>35</sup> Sect. i. n. 8.

to it." In these words the author makes ample provision for all that is positive in evil; evil is in a positive and good subject; it comes from an agent positive and good; yet its precise badness, *ipsa malitia qua talis*, is a privation. "The unsuitableness itself belongs to the category of privation; it lies in the unfitness for suitable union or composition"<sup>36</sup> between the form which is positive and good in itself, and the subject which is positive and good in itself. These expressions must not be pushed too far. The evil of a parasitic disease is not simply that a morbid growth is under privation of the power to maintain itself without injuring man, while man is under privation of the power to feed it without loss to his own integrity. These two inabilities are *not* privations, if the two growths are considered as possible apart; for it is then *not due to either* that it should be able to accommodate the other. What now lives as a parasite, perhaps, can also maintain a non-parasitic life: in which case the two lives are compatible. Their mutual unsuitableness does not become an evil till a combination takes place which is detrimental to at least one side. Here begins the badness; for however good man may be to his destroying parasite, it is bad to him. The evil is neither a positive Being nor a positive activity of Being as such; it is the privation of some perfection, the absence of a good that is needful. What the parasite takes from man leaves him in the evil plight. "The evil," says St. Thomas,<sup>37</sup> "which attaches to some good, is the privation of

<sup>36</sup> L.c.

<sup>37</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xix. a. ix.

some further good ; ” “ evil is the deficiency of some good which ought to be present.”<sup>38</sup>

It is likely to have struck the reader, that when evil is said to arise as a result from the unsuitableness there is between two finite beings as regards the union of their several perfections,—for example, from such an incompatibility as there is between the successful propagation of a disease germ and the successful functioning of the system at whose expense it feeds,—the difficulty is to fix on a standard of good. Clearly if the disease germ kills the man we call that evil; if the human system proves too strong for the germ and kills it, we call that good: because we can give a decided preference here to the human organism. But in the struggle for existence between life and life in the mere animal or vegetable order, or between compound and compound in the mineral order, frequently we have no absolute standard. In these cases we either give no preference, or else we give it on the understanding that it is relative to present purposes, and may be reversed under other requirements. In general we make our standard the adaptability to ordinary human uses. On this criterion water in the liquid state is often pronounced good; in the frozen condition, evil. Likewise we may at times have regard to the universe as a whole, or to our planet in particular, or to the interests of our nation above other nations. In living beings there is a healthy standard which is scarcely to be found in chemical combinations,

<sup>38</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xlix. a. i.

among which the chemist comes to have a wonderful impartiality, being as interested in a process of decomposition as of composition or of preservation. Thus it appears that we must allow for the relativity of good, without allowing that good is a purely relative term; for we can fix some points of absolute worth.

The conclusion is that we are neither pessimists nor optimists; that we admit evil, but not any essentially evil principle: that we maintain every Being as such, and every activity of Being as such, to be good, yet so that out of the interrelations of finite perfections evil may ensue for want of the power of mutual accommodation. When evil does thus result the badness itself is neither a positive Being, nor a positive activity of Being; it is the privation of some perfection, the absence of a good that is needful. Moral evil because of the peculiar nature of free-will, which does not act simply with the mathematical necessity of its nature, presents special difficulties in the way of the reduction of evil to a privation; but to these we have paid no special attention because they belong to another treatise.<sup>39</sup> We are content to point out that there is a distinction between the physical evil which results

<sup>39</sup> For the Patristic authority that evil is nothing positive but a privation, see St. Augustine, *De Natura Boni*; St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Lib. IV. c. ii. The schools are divided on the point, as to whether it is needful or possible to reduce moral evil to the category of a privation. Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Bellarmine, Suarez, are on the affirmative side, while on the negative stand many Thomists, with Cajetan at their head. (In 1a 2æ, q. xviii. a. v.)



from intrinsically and separately good agencies, working according to the rigorous necessities of their nature, and that evil which is not chargeable upon nature, but upon the responsibility of the individual who may use or abuse his powers at will.

There is, however, one evil which is found both in the sensible and in the rational order, and which seems to present peculiar obstacles when we try to show that it is privation; which, moreover, we cannot fairly transmit for consideration to another treatise. Pain seems to be a positive evil; for it is not reducible to the absence of pleasure, nor, on the theory that some painful positions bring pleasure along with them, because of the sympathy received or because of an exalted state of feeling, can we argue that pain is only pleasure in disguise. We can, however, urge as a preliminary point that pain has its decided uses, so decided that a cautious man would think twice before he voted, supposing the case was put to the plebiscite, that pain should be utterly abolished from the universe. Pain is a most useful monitor against the approach of disease and death to the body; it is the only check which we have on the deeds of some of the criminal classes; it offers occasion for the highest human virtues. Still it is a sign, that however wonderful be the perfection displayed in that most wonderful of things, consciousness, the created consciousness is what theologians called a *mixed perfection*—that is, a kind of perfection which involves an element of imperfection. Finite objects have always this draw-

back, that the consequence of the limitations in their nature is at least a liability to evil. Created consciousness, while it is the very condition for being able to enjoy pleasure, has the defect that it is also the very condition for possible pain.

Pain is, first of all, in the sensitive faculties. Here we should have no difficulty in showing that so far as concerns the material conditions, the evil in the nervous system is a privation of some con-natural state. There remains still the *feeling* of pain in sensation, which *feeling* is bad; and this we will recur to when we have brought down pain in the intellectual order to a similar residuum. Pain in this latter order is difficult to analyze. We cannot, to begin with, assign a deranged condition of parts to the soul, answering to what we said about the derangement of the nervous organism. On the other hand, what we know of the punishment of lost angels, and of lost souls of men in the disembodied condition, suggests the idea of a pain in the very substance of the soul. Again it might be asked whether, when the body is in pain, a sympathetic condition of pain is not taken up in the substance of the soul. Whatever other answer may be given to these difficulties, at any rate pain, as pain, must always be a conscious state, and consciousness in creatures, the only beings capable of pain, is not a substance, but the accident of a faculty, whatever may be the precise distinction of that faculty from its substance, whether real or only mental. Now pain *as found in consciousness* will be, under one aspect, the perception of some evil either

moral or simply physical. Moral evil we have already passed over; and physical evil, as perceived by the intelligence to exist between objects, could be reduced to privation. There stands over, nevertheless, the pain of *feeling*. *Painful feeling*, then, whether in the sensitive or in the intellectual sphere, is the evil that has yet to be reconciled with our proposition, "Every Being is good."

We will not ground the reconciliation on the doctrine that Being and consciousness are the two great opposites; and that therefore positive evil in consciousness is no proof of positive evil in Being. At the same time it is fair to appeal to a parallel case. Against the thesis, "Every Being is true," it is no exception that there are such things as positively erroneous judgments; for the error in such judgments is logical, not ontological, while our thesis is concerned with truth as ontological. Moreover, the positive error is not a positive perception, for it results from an act of the intellect, which passes beyond strictly intellectual procedure. To return, however, to pain as in consciousness; this is in some way an entity. But what kind of an entity? Psychologists have great difficulty in determining what that *feeling* is, that *sense of pleasure and pain*, that *emotion*, which is found in the exercise of thought and will. It seems extravagant to teach that such *feeling* has as much right to be distinguished from thought and will, as these two have to be distinguished from each other; the more moderate doctrine seems to be, that precisely because thought and

will are conscious acts, they will carry with them the character of pain or pleasure, though sometimes these characters may be reduced, if not absolutely, at least equivalently to nothing. Feeling is thus a character of conscious action. Painful feeling in a certain sense, has a positive opposition to pleasant, for it is its contrary, and not its mere contradictory. Are we, then, to be distressed that we cannot, in pain, discover the privation of some element, such that in this privation the very *formality* of its evil consists? We think not. We found that in assigning privations we always reduced evil to a defective composition of elements either of substantial or accidental elements, or of both together. Now pain *considered simply as a feeling* does not allow of analysis into parts. We may analyze the objects or motives which cause pain: we may in them discover the privations that are evil. We may likewise distinguish one pain as different in quantity or quality from another. But within a single painful feeling, *regarded as a feeling*, we cannot distinguish an element which is present, and another element, the absence of which is a privation. The conclusion is that the evil of pain offers no valid objection to our general doctrine, for we see clear reason why our ordinary analysis in the case proposed cannot be fully completed.

(d) Being in its reference to the intellect has been shown to be true; in its reference to the will it has been shown to be good, and if we had what some assert, a distinct faculty for the perception of the beautiful, Being in reference to that

would give us the beautiful. But we have no such special faculty, so we must manage to find the beauty of Being in its reference either to intellect, or to will, or to both. Thus we shall identify the beautiful with the good, or the true, or both. Identifying it with the good, St. Thomas refers the latter in this case, not as before, to an appetite for the possession of it, but to the intelligence of it; he makes the beautiful to be the good as affording contemplative delight, apart from the desire to possess.<sup>40</sup> "The beautiful," he says, "is the same thing as the *good*, from which it is only mentally distinguished. For as the good is the object of all appetite (*quod omnia appetunt*), its nature is to give rest to the appetite. But the special nature of the beautiful is, that by *its mere contemplation* the appetite is set at rest; hence those senses which belong most to the *cognitive* order are most apt to perceive the beautiful, namely, the eyes and the ears which especially minister to the reason; for we speak of beautiful sights and sounds, but *not* of beautiful tastes and odours. Whence it appears that the *beautiful* adds to the notion of the *good* a peculiar relation to the cognitive powers; and while the *good* is that object which simply gratifies the appetite, the *beautiful* is that which gratifies by its mere apprehension." In another place<sup>41</sup> he repeats nearly the same words, except that instead of referring both properties to a "quieting of the appetite," he distinguishes appetite and intelligence, and says that while the good and the beautiful are

<sup>40</sup> *Sum.* 1a 2æ, q. xxvii. a. i. ad 3.   <sup>41</sup> *Sum.* i. q. v. a. iv. ad 1.

the same really, yet as mentally distinguished "the good properly has reference to the *appetite* (that being good which is the object of all appetite, for which reason good has the character of an end, and appetite the character of a movement to this end): on the other hand the beautiful has reference to the cognitive power, for those things are beautiful which please in their very contemplation." We may borrow an illustration from Cousin,<sup>42</sup> who contrasts the artistic delight of gazing upon a beautifully arranged banquet, with a fear perhaps to spoil it by beginning to eat, and the gastronomic delight at the prospect of so many good things to eat. As the reason for the delight of the intellect in the pure contemplation of the beautiful, St. Thomas assigns the pleasure which the mind experiences at beholding therein its own likeness<sup>43</sup>—something which presents a rational order. "When an object is such that it offers several elements at least virtually distinct, and these elements conspire to give to the whole a unity, each part bearing a proportion to the total nature of the thing; then there is offered to the mind an object which delights the gaze, and is called *beautiful*." Hence the beautiful lies in proportion, in unity amid variety, or in the combination of the three elements, completeness of the whole (*integritas, perfectio*), harmonious relation of parts (*debita proportio, consonantia*), and, shed over all, a certain definiteness, clearness, lustre or splendour (*claritas*).<sup>44</sup>

What will strike the ordinary student of art

<sup>42</sup> *Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien*, Leçon vi.

<sup>43</sup> *Sum.* i. q. v. a. iv. ad 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xxxix. a. viii.

when he reads the theory of St. Thomas, will be its extreme generality, and the utter absence from it of all practical detail. This is only what was to be expected. For just as the metaphysical account of the *good*, that it is Being in its relation to appetite or will, leaves a whole treatise to be written upon what actions are morally good, and what bad: so the metaphysical account of the *beautiful* leaves the several æsthetic treatises, in different departments, to be yet excogitated. No painter or sculptor is invited to attend the school of General Metaphysics, on the promise, that what he there learns will act as substitute for a long technical training in his special art, or will enable him to judge definitively between rival styles. Ontology simply professes to take the highest generality, Being, and to point out how connected, and even identified with its two properties, *truth* and *goodness*, is another property, *beauty*; which arises when the mere contemplation of the *good*, apart from its possession, gives pleasure to the mind, because of a perceived order in elements really or virtually distinct from another. If, therefore, in General Metaphysics the treatment of the beautiful is very general and very metaphysical, that is only what ought to be.

It may be objected that, on St. Thomas's theory, every object ought to be beautiful. As a fact there are some who do not shrink from the proposition,<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Not merely the schoolmen so speak. De Quincey says so, and Mr. Ruskin writes: "There is not a single object in nature which is not capable of conveying ideas of beauty, and which to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful parts."

"Every Being is beautiful;" and if you remind them that some Beings are ugly, they reply that as the thesis, "Every Being is good," leaves room for a sense in which it can be said "Some Beings are bad," so "Every Being is beautiful" may allow a sense in which some Beings are ugly. In that case ugliness, like evil, would be explained by unsuitable interrelations between parts in themselves unexceptionable. Each distinct Being, each *ens essentialis*, would have its degree of beauty, which might be a low one and scarcely perceptible to us: while ugliness would arise from the defects due to unsuitable combinations. In a gas-light to which is gradually admitted a larger and larger supply of gas, the flame is there from the beginning; but it is not called bright till it has reached the pitch of intensity—not accurately determinable—at which we start to call it bright. So every Being, as such, has a beauty proper to its nature; but before we recognize it as beauty it must have reached a certain degree. Hence with Plato and others the beautiful is not merely the true or the good, but the *splendour* of the true or the good, or the *splendour*<sup>46</sup> of order. There must be an element of *distinction*, as Mr. Matthew Arnold would have said, of *lustre*, as Father Faber puts it; and this *splendour*, or *distinction*, or *lustre*, is often supplied by some pleasing instance of "unity in variety," which

<sup>46</sup> Liberatore, *Ontologia*, c. i. art. viii. n. 62, quotes a definition by St. Thomas: "The universal character of the beautiful is the splendour of form as shown either in different parts of matter, or in different powers and activities."



many make to be the very definition of the beautiful.

It may be urged, in remonstrance, that a barn may be built in good proportions without beauty; and that it and many other unbeautiful objects present "unity in variety," without "splendour" or "distinction," or "lustre," which are just the question-begging words, to explain which would be to explain precisely wherein the beautiful lies; these are what want defining. Perhaps this mention of defining is itself a piece of question-begging, if definition be understood in its strict sense. For in that case it requires the use, not of mere synonyms, but of distinctly simpler terms; and there are those who maintain that the *true*, the *good*, and the *beautiful* are not really reducible to simpler terms when they are considered in their most generalized form; though of course in their more particular determinations the elements can be analyzed. At any rate some form of the doctrine that the beautiful is based on unity amid variety has found extensive acceptance, and a few samples of how authors work this theory will be instructive. On this point Sir J. Barry says that the disputes about definition do not represent corresponding divergencies in the idea itself of the beautiful; and he allows the theory of unity in variety on condition that this combination be such as to show "fitness and conformity to the design of each species." Cousin, dispensing with this limitation, says:<sup>47</sup> "The most probable theory of the beautiful is still

<sup>47</sup> *Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien*, Leçon vii.

that which makes it consist of two elements mutually opposed and equally necessary ; these are unity and variety. Take a beautiful flower : undoubtedly it has got unity, order, proportion, symmetry, for without these it would lack that intelligible significance, which is so marvellously present in all things. But at the same time what diversity there is ! What delicate shades in the colour, what richness in the smallest details ! In mathematics themselves what is beautiful is not the abstract principle, but the principle bearing with it all its long train of consequences. Unity and variety are the notions applicable to all orders of beauty." In support of Cousin stands his compatriot Lacordaire : "Isolation is the denial of order, of harmony, of beauty, since none of these things can be conceived without the double idea of plurality and unity. Plurality without unity is positive disorder : unity without plurality is negative disorder. In the former case the bond is wanting to the things, in the second case the things are wanting to the bond." When we have paralleled the words of these two French authors with words from two English writers, Cardinal Newman and Mr. Ruskin, we may draw a conclusion which is highly practical, even though our theoretical analysis of the idea of beauty be judged still incomplete. The Cardinal writes with his usual power of descriptiveness on the subject of the Divine Beauty : "Order and harmony are God's very essence. To be many and distinct in His attributes, yet after all to be but One—to be sanctity, justice, truth, love, power, wisdom—to be

all at once each of these as fully as if He were nothing else but it, and as if the rest were not ; this implies in the Divine Nature an infinitely sovereign and utterly incomprehensible order, which is an attribute as wonderful as any, and the result of all the others. Such is the unity and consequent harmony and beauty of the Divine Nature." The passage from Mr. Ruskin is on a less sacred subject, but its teaching is corroborative: "*Composition* means literally and simply *putting together several things*, so as to make *one thing* out of them, the nature and goodness of which they will all have a share in producing. Thus a musician composes an air by putting notes together in certain relations; and a painter a picture by putting forms and colours in pleasant order. In all these cases observe an *intended unity* must be the result of the composition. Everything should have a determined place, perform an intended part, act in that part advantageously for everything that is connected with it." The practical lesson is that we should improve many of our unpleasing productions by more attention to the variety which saves from wearisome monotony, and to unity which saves from distraction and pointlessness; and these results are often desirable for higher ends than mere artistic effects. So we have gained at least one clear advantage from our imperfect study of an æsthetic theory, if we have thoroughly grasped what Mr. Tyrwhitt declares to be the compendious principle of all artistic composition, namely, "that it has several ideas made into one new idea, with skilful use either of contrast which

produces excitement, or of harmony which produces repose, or of both together which produces reflective repose."

It would not be well to omit all mention of the fact, that there is a great difficulty in the way of defining the beautiful because the use of the term is made very elastic. Often it means almost any pleasure-producing character, in which case the Alisonian theory of association becomes very applicable. For we must allow to the accidental result of associations much of the charm of many objects that are said to be beautiful. Round a name, a phrase, a form, or a piece of imagery there may gather a wealth of pleasant feeling which is not to be accounted for by the things themselves, but by connected circumstances. Again, the vagueness of the term "beautiful" is seen in its alternate inclusion and exclusion of what gratifies the sense. Mere sense-gratification is not strictly beautiful; and yet the senses feed the intellect, and for a composite being like man, much real artistic effect depends on a judicious admixture of the elements of sense and intellect. Hence art has been called *spiritualisatio materialium, et materialisatio spiritualium*. Excess may be committed on both sides, as in M. Taine's overdone rendering of intellectual thoughts into sensuous imagery, and in the fondness of a recent English poet for abstruse metaphysical expressions to represent physical nature. The sense-element, then, has its place, but it is absurd to reduce the beautiful to formulas like "the maximum of nerve-stimulation with the minimum of fatigue." In this

place, however, it is enough to have pointed out that there are broader and narrower acceptations of the term, and that these render a commonly acceptable definition very hard to frame.

(4) We have given now the properties of Being. Under this heading it is not so much the beautiful that the schoolmen are wont to discuss as the one, the true, and the good, in which attributes beauty is included, though not explicitly declared. Hegelians dislike this triple attribution, and think that they have got hold of a more philosophical doctrine, when they speak of Quality, Quantity, and Measure. One statement of their view is given in brief by Mr. Wallace,<sup>48</sup> and we append it for the cursory inspection of the reader, not believing that it merits or will bear deep investigation. "The first part of Logic, the theory of Being, may be called the theory of unsupported and freely-floating Being. We do not mean *something* which is, but mere IS, the bare fact of Being, without any substratum. The degree of condensation or development, when substantive and attribute co-exist, has not yet come. The terms and forms of Being float as it were freely in the air, or to put it more correctly, one passes into the other. . . . This Being is immediate, *i.e.*, it contains no reference binding it with anything beyond itself, but stands forward baldly and nakedly, as if alone; and if hard pressed, it turns over into something else. It includes the three stages of *Quality*, *Quantity*, and *Measure*. The ether of *is* presumes no substratum, or further connexion with

<sup>48</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, Prolegomena, p. cxix.

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anything; and we only meet a series of points as we travel along the surface of thought. To *name*, to *number*, to *measure*, are the three grades of our ordinary and natural thought; so simple that one is scarcely disposed to look upon them as grades of thought at all. And yet if thought is self-specification, what more obvious forms of specifying it are there than to *name* (so pointing it out, or qualifying it), to *number*, (so quantifying it, or stating its dimensions), and to *measure* it. These are the three primary specificates by which we think—the three primary dimensions of thought.” We give this merely as a specimen of a rival theory which has got acceptance in some of our few philosophic strongholds; but by what intrinsic merits of its own we are at a loss to discover. The reader is not asked to work at the above extract till he fully grasps its meaning; that would be a cruel task to impose upon him; but he may take an intelligent interest in catching some glimpse of Hegelian method.

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) It is one thing to give the definitions in a science like General Metaphysics, and another to know the exact mode of their application to special cases. It would be preposterous to demand of the logician, who describes what "moral certainty" is, to pronounce decisively on the degree of credence to be attached to any historical statement whatever, which a questioner might bring forward. Similarly when the metaphysician has defined an individual to be "some one thing which cannot be divided into a plurality of things like to itself," he is not thereby obliged to know all about what happens in fissiparous generation. If the biologist will tell him exactly what it is that happens in this mode of propagation, and what precisely is the truth about one or more vital principles, then the metaphysical definition of individuality can be easily applied; but till the case is understood, the application must wait.

As suggestive cases to show the difficulties which beset the study of individuality in detail, we may mention the conception of the physical universe, such as it is furnished by Sir William Thomson's vortex theory, or by dynamism; the aggregate life in a polypdom; the power of some segmented animals, after having been cut in two, to go on living as different individuals; the condition of some growths, which appear like independent lives, set up within a larger organism. Then there are other theories, strange to physical science, but common enough to speculative philosophers, which give a curious view of individuality. Such is Plato's world-soul or Cudworth's "plastic nature." On the latter hypothesis,<sup>1</sup> "though it is not reasonable to

<sup>1</sup> *Intellectual System*, Bk. I. c. iii. art. xxxvii. n. 25.

think that every plant, herb, or pile of grass *hath a plastic life of its own*, distinct from the mechanism of the body; nor that the whole earth is an animal endowed with a conscious soul; yet there may be *one plastic nature or life belonging to the whole terrestrial globe*, by which all plants and vegetables continuous with it may be differently formed, as also minerals and other bodies framed, and whatever else is above the power of fortuitous mechanism effected."

(2) A scholastic dispute about individuality turns on the distinction of matter and form. If we go back as far as the Arabian philosopher, Avicenna,<sup>2</sup> we find him teaching that "to assert souls separate from matter is to propound an opinion which no philosopher accepts, and what is very doubtful. The reason is, that *matter is the principle of number and plurality*." This doctrine as a whole is, of course, repudiated even by those among the Christian schoolmen who place the principle of individualism in the *material component* of bodies, not in the *form*. It is a remarkable consequence of this last theory, that its upholders find themselves driven on to regard each angel as specifically distinct, and to affirm that two angels, because they have no material component to give them their individuality, can never be regarded as merely individuals of one species; on the other hand, it must be recorded that there are schoolmen to whom such a view appears highly incomprehensible; and they place individuality in the whole concrete nature of a thing, whether matter and form in combination, or form alone.

(3) Concerning individuality we must not mix up the different questions: (a) what is the efficient cause of the individual? (b) what intrinsically constitutes the individual? and (c) what are the outward signs by

<sup>2</sup> Stöckl, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Band II. ss. 58—67.



which we practically tell this individual from another? Locke blunders here: for just as he confuses a sign of personality, namely, continuous self-consciousness with personality itself, and a sign of free-will, namely, the power of outward execution with free-will itself, so he puts a sign of individuality for its constituent, saying: "The principle of individuation, it is plain, is existence itself, which determines a Being of any sort *to a particular time and place*, incommunicable to two Beings of the same kind;"<sup>3</sup> whereupon he proceeds to insist, not on the "existence itself," but on the "particular time and place." With Locke's view may be compared, but not made interchangeable, Leibnitz's principle of "the identity of indiscernibles"—a principle valid enough for an omniscient intellect, but not in itself sufficient for a finite intellect, unless supplemented by something more positive than mere indiscernibility; for we cannot seriously argue that wherever we perceive no diversity, there we have identity.

(4) As a specimen of how interpreters endeavour to extract Plato's theory about the true and the good, and the priority of the good, we may take Mr. R. L. Nettleship's words:<sup>4</sup> "The sense in which the *good* is used by Plato is, perhaps, most simply and clearly illustrated in the familiar expressions: 'What is the good of a thing?' 'What is a thing good for?' . . . To conceive a thing as good for something is, in the truest sense of the words, nothing more than to conceive it as having a meaning, or being intelligible; for strictly speaking, a thing of which the elements exist side by side in no order or connexion whatever, or a thing which itself exists by the side of other things without standing in any expressible relation to them, is to our

<sup>3</sup> *Hellenica*, Essays edited by Evelyn Abbott, pp. 172—177.

<sup>4</sup> *Human Understanding*, Bk. II. c. xxvii.

intelligence an inconceivable non-entity. And the moment we mentally interpret a thing, or in other words understand it, we give it a reason for existing, whether that reason be a form which it assumes, a purpose which it serves, a function which it performs, or a substance which it is. . . . The world is not an unmeaning chaos, but a something of which, however slowly, we are discovering, and not merely inventing, the significance. . . . Like the sun in the allegory of the cave, *the good* is the crowning vision in the upward progress of the soul from darkness to light, or to speak without metaphor, if the soul, in the strength of the dialectical impulse, penetrates right through the imagery of sense, and traverses the whole chain of intelligible relations, the 'end of the intelligible' at which it arrives, the 'unhypothetical first principle' upon which it sees the whole structure of knowledge to depend, is again *the good*. In Plato's mind, then, the conception of knowledge and truth, the conception of objective reality or essence, and the conception of systematic order or cosmos, alike implied the conception of a *good*, which cannot be identified with any of them, but is the condition or the logical *prius* of them all." It is upon these last words especially that the critic would fix, for *the good* must be identified with the Being, the Truth, the Order of which it is the good: so that whatever priority may, under some aspects, be given to the good, it cannot be a priority excluding identification.

(5) Aristotle's theory of the beautiful is often referred to; his two constituents are "order and size" (*τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστί*). By size he means what is not insignificantly small, nor yet so large as to be more than the apprehension can well take in at once. This brings us near to his doctrine that virtue

consists in the mean; which doctrine again has an affinity with certain views taken by Goethe, Wordsworth, G. Eliot, and others. They teach that it is mostly in common things that art must find its materials, especially in middle-class life, which escapes the sordidness of poverty at one extreme and the affectations of luxury on the other. A kindred notion again is that of Sir J. Reynolds, with regard to the ideal average type. "Most people err," he says in his Lectures, "not so much from want of capacity to find their object, as from not knowing what object to pursue. This great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us. But the power of discovering what is *deformed* in nature, or in other words, *what is particular and uncommon*, can be acquired only by experience: and the whole beauty and grandeur of art consists in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind." The theory is supplemented by what Reynolds writes in his letters to the *Idler*: "I suppose it will easily be granted, that no man can judge whether any animal be beautiful of its kind or deformed, who has seen *only one of that species*. . . . The works of nature, if we compare one species with another, are all equally beautiful, and preference is given from custom or some association of ideas. In creatures of the same species, beauty is *the medium or centre of its various forms*." Mr. Ruskin's variation upon this doctrine is, that what nature does rarely will be either very beautiful or very ugly; thus he allows that a very wide departure from average type may be very beautiful, on which supposition beauty cannot be defined as average type.

(6) The pleasure felt at the display of great imitative.

skill is often confounded with the beautiful, but is not in itself the same thing.

Il, n'est pas de serpent ni de monstre hideux  
Qui par l'art imité ne puisse plaire aux yeux.

On the other hand, it is not impossible that what is from one aspect repulsive may from another have beauty in it: and the selective power of the artist will exert its influence in stripping off or hiding away what is repellent. "Everything," says Kant, "short of what is nauseous, may be made beautiful by artistic rendering. The genius of art frees the object from the hampering and distracting circumstances, which hang around it in what is called real life, that is to say, frees it from association with opinions, wishes, laws, and other conventionalities, and lets us see it as an object wrought by nature, expressing, by the unsuborned concilience of its parts and features, a truth typical and universal. It does, in short, perfectly and over a wide range what ordinary perception does in a few instances."<sup>5</sup> Still it is only a lower stage of art which delights simply in imitation, and is ready, as Plato says, to imitate anything and everything.

(7) With regard to the symbolism of various artistic forms, we must remember what is true of most conventional signs, that they have a suggestion of their use in the nature of things, but that it is left to the choice of man to turn this suggestion one way or another. Hence the possibility of many interpretations for one symbol. Music, not determined by words, is notoriously indefinite; the words of a well-adapted song give a fixed meaning to the tune, but not in such a way that a different song may not be, perhaps equally well, adapted to the same tune. Critics, therefore,

<sup>5</sup> *Kant*, by W. Wallace, p. 197.

should be careful in not forcing a symbolic meaning on another man's work, and in not refusing to accept the artist's own symbolic purpose as a justification of what he has done. A wide and wise tolerance is needed in these matters, to save the non-artistic world from utter distrust in artists, who are ever pronouncing upon each other the verdicts of "utterly wrong," "quite out of taste," "devoid of all idea," "a confused medley of elements." In art especially we may have what in philosophy we try to abolish, namely, an effective use of the element of the vague. As a contrast with the clear, definite, correct, but somewhat narrow genius of the Greeks, which constantly aimed at getting quit of τὸ ἄπειρον, we have the grandeur of a partially intelligible vagueness, such as we often find in Holy Scripture when it treats of mysteries that are but darkly revealed. As regards finite things, however, when these come under human treatment, what is sometimes called the obscure element of the finite may easily be overstated, till we fall into a sort of pantheism. We may say with Mr. Ruskin, that "art is man's delight in God's work," but we feel the need of some qualifying phrases before we adopt without reserve Mr. Tyrwhitt's comment in his *Pictorial Handbook*: "As to the beauty of nature, it seems to defy all analysis, and this, and its universal presence, and the intensely powerful feeling it evokes, seem to point to its being a *direct manifestation* of Divine power. Again, the fact that man can produce it in a high perfection, but cannot analyze it, or clearly see how he produces it, seems to throw light on the expression that man is made in the image of God." All created Being is indeed a sort of reflexion from the Divine; but what may be called Platonic modes of expressing the fact easily grow exaggerated. But a moderate form of Plato's doctrine is what Cardinal

Zigliara is aiming at when he says: "The essence of beauty does not consist properly in proportion and neat adaptation, nor in harmony and unity of parts; but it consists in that harmony whereby the beautiful object corresponds to its archetype, namely, to the light of intellect as showing forth the rule and measure of beauty. The original archetype is in the Divine mind, the secondary is in the created mind. For we experience in our intelligence the vision of I know not what primitive and excellent form; and gazing upon this as a pattern the mind judges what each object ought to be like."<sup>6</sup>

(8) Of all the attempts to get at the physical basis of certain beautiful forms, the science of acoustics has made about the most successful in its theory of music. Though it cannot explain everything, it can give a fair account why single notes are not mere noises, and why the laws of succession and concurrence among several notes are what they are. Thus it affords us some means of judging between the two extreme theories, that all beauty comes from the arrangement of indifferent elements, and that all beauty is resolvable into elements, which we must accept as given, but not hope to explain.

<sup>6</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. II. c. ii. art. vii.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE POSSIBILITIES OF BEING.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) The pure empiricist must, on principle, give up the inquiry into the ultimate source of possibilities.
- (2) Of those who have a theory, some wrongly make potentiality prior to actuality.
- (3) The true theory of ultimate possibilities.
- (4) Opposed by the error of Descartes.
- (5) Necessary and contingent Being.
- (6) The above account of necessary and of possible Being explains how finite essences are sometimes said to be eternal, immutable, beyond contingency.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(1) BEING, says St. Thomas,<sup>1</sup> is adequately divided by a dichotomy, *per potentiam et actum*; it is either possible or actual. The former must be the next subject of our investigation: we must try to throw some light on that dark region of which Cicero speaks at the opening of his treatise *De Fato*: "There is an obscure question about the possible and the impossible, which the Greek philosophers call *περὶ δυνατόων*." For want of a good theology the Greeks could make little or nothing out of their inquiry; and the same want still shows itself distressingly in some of our modern speculators. Consistent disciples in the school of Hume can go no

<sup>1</sup> In *Metaphys.* Lib. III. sect. i.

further than man's experience, such as it *de facto* is; the actual for them is the measure of all known possibility, and they profess to hold no proposition, which is more than verbal, with the assent due to a universal and necessary truth. They teach that all which at present we call true might, for anything we can tell, have been just the opposite; and why anything is as it is, rather than the other way about, lies wholly beyond our power of penetration. We must renounce the investigation of origins or ultimate reasons; we must take phenomena as we find them, and leave alone all theory as to their commencement or endless continuation.

- Vainly does each, as he glides,  
 Fable and dream  
 Of the lands which the river of Time  
 Had left, ere he woke on its breast,  
 Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.  
 Only the tract where he sails  
 He wots of; only the thoughts,  
 Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

For what was before us we know not,  
 And we know not what shall succeed.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Hume is worse than merely negative; by his denial of free-will, he leads directly to fatalism. For from his principles it is inferred, not only that man is without freedom, but that the very idea involves a self-contradiction; whence it straightway follows that nothing could ever be other than it is, and the actual, as it developes itself throughout the course of the ages, is the exact

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Arnold's *Poems*, "The Future."



measure of the possible. The utmost that Pure Metaphysics can mean when it teaches by the mouth of Mill or Huxley, that a square might have been elliptical, and that two and two might have made five, is that if our universe had been other than it is—though other it could not have been for want of a power to bring about the diversity—or if again our organism had responded differently to its outer environment, then on either hypothesis our associated ideas might have fallen into this order: “a square is elliptical,” “two and two make five.”<sup>3</sup> Regarding the universe as “a closed system,” which has nothing outside to influence it, the followers of Hume state, by way of purely unrealizable hypothesis, that if the parts of the system had been otherwise arranged, there is no knowing the limits to which the changes in its working might have been carried; any present order might have been reversed. Therefore, *a priori* we can call nothing possible rather than impossible; and for us to ask, why it is that some things are intrinsically possible and others not, is a most idle inquiry, because we never can do more than take these matters as we find them, without pretending to fix any ultimate basis.

(2) Next to the pure empiricists who are without a theory as to the foundation of possibility, we take those who hold the false theory that \*potentiality, and not actuality, is the origin of all existence. This doctrine appears in some of the old cos-

<sup>3</sup> Hume allows only a pair of absolutely contradictory ideas, *existence and non-existence*.

mogonies which start the course of Being from a pure possibility, or at any rate, in their uncertain gropings after a philosophy of origins, occasionally lay hold of some such explanation. Nor is modern speculation wholly above theories of this kind; for we find Hartmann<sup>4</sup> laying it down in all seriousness, that "before the world stood forth in determinate form there was not anything actual—anything beyond the great motionless, inactive, self-containing *Wesen* without *Dasein*—which was Nothing." Now it lies at the root of all right conception about Being clearly to perceive, how while in regard to secondary existences the possibility precedes the actuality, yet the primary existence itself must always have been actual. A potency is not an utter, non-entity if there is some actuality by which it can be reduced to act; but the idea of an original potency, before any actuality whatever, is no real idea at all, but a contradiction. To Mill's "possibilities of sensation," and "possibilities of conscious state," apart from all substance and efficient causality, it is a strong objection that they are possibilities stripped of the conditions of possibility. Against them is valid the argument which is not valid against Aristotle's understanding of *ἐν δυνάμει*. In criticism of the latter conception Lewes contends "that nothing really exists till it exists, and nothing exists possibly, for possibility is only the uncertainty of our ignorance." This would have some truth in it if there were nothing already actual and

<sup>4</sup> See his system in the last volume of Stöckl's *Geschichte der Philosophie*.

possessed of the power of efficient causality ; but it is quite untrue as directed against the system of Aristotle. We must, then, hold by the doctrine that the source of all possibility is to be finally traced to the actual ; the opposite conception is irrational.

(3) General Metaphysics borrows from Natural Theology the principles which explain the real nature of possibilities : all it has to do on its own part is to make a few deductions from these principles. We assume, therefore, that the first Being is God, who is one and infinitely perfect ; who eternally and immutably exists by His own very essence ; besides whom nothing exists or can exist, except in dependence on Him as its Creator out of nothing—creating not blindly and perforce, but with intelligence and free choice. Himself a pure actuality without any potentiality—*actus purissimus*—He has yet the active power to produce objects other than Himself. How this is to be explained is what we have now to declare.

We make a mental but not a real distinction between God's essence, His intellect, and His will. Under the terms of this three-fold distinction we say that the essence furnishes the primary object to the intellect, and the intellect guides the will. Thus God does not will without intelligence, nor is His intelligence the arbitrary creator of its own truths. The intellect, however, first gives determination to the several possibilities in their distinctness ; for it would be wildly extravagant to regard the Divine essence itself as a sort of tessellated or mosaic work, made up of as many independent parts or patterns

as there are independent natures possible in creation. Such a monstrous conception would have less sanity in it, than Vacherot's saying, *Dieu est l'idée du monde, et le monde est la réalité de Dieu*. The fact is that God, contemplating His own essence, sees it not only as it is in itself, but also as it dictates the law to all possibility outside itself. Consequently, what is possible will always be a rational object to thought;<sup>5</sup> what is impossible will always be irrational or self-contradictory. The self-contradictory is a non-entity, and hence the impossible is no limit on the Divine power. To declare simply that a square circle cannot be, because it is beyond the power of omnipotence, leaves unexplained how this is not a denial of omnipotence; but to say that a square circle is nothing, shows how there is no such denial.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, then, we have settled what is the ultimate determinant of possibility: we must throw further light on the doctrine by distinguishing between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* possibility. It is the intrinsically possible that our explanation has so far been concerned with; and we have seen it to be any positive object the conception of which includes no contradiction, no inner repugnance of character, such as is found in "a learned carriage-wheel."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This adds light to the previous proposition, "Every Being is true."

<sup>6</sup> St. Thomas, *Contra Gentes*, Lib. II. c. xxv.

<sup>7</sup> Hume is correct in the assertion, but he has no right to make it, that "'tis an established maxim in Metaphysics that nothing that we can clearly conceive is absolutely impossible." (*Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. II. sect. ii.)

Extrinsic possibility is the power possessed by something else to actualize that which is intrinsically possible. In reference to created forces, many things intrinsically possible are extrinsically impossible; but in reference to God's omnipotence, just because it is omnipotence, the extrinsically possible is co-extensive with the intrinsically possible. Because, however, what singly involves no repugnance may in conjunction with certain circumstances present contradictions, therefore we have the class of *impossibilia*, or things possible separately but not conjointly. God cannot arrange the order of His Providence so as to put before man good and evil, between which to choose, and at the same time take the choice of evil quite out of human power. God cannot retreat from His promise once unconditionally given; neither can He literally undo the past, though often He may repair it:

μόνον γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ Θεὸς στερίσκεται,  
ἀγέννητα ποιεῖν ἕως' ἂν ᾗ πεπραγμένα.

God, again, cannot Himself, and in His own Divine Nature, elicit those acts which are essentially immanent in a finite and imperfect nature: He cannot vegetate, or have sensations, or make new discoveries, or show courage in the arduous pursuit of virtue, or nobly apologize for a mistake.

*A propos* of mistakes, we are liable to them in the case of ambiguous words; and therefore it will not be without its utility, as a caution, to point out how the above description of "possible," whether as intrinsic or as extrinsic, differs from another use of

the "possible," whereby it signifies the "probable." A person may say to his friend, who ought to have sailed for America a month ago, but perhaps did not, "Possibly he is yet in England." Now if the man really has landed in the New World, and has remained there, it is not "possible" that he should still be in England except in the sense of "probable," to one who is left to mere conjecture. Probability is a calculation made partly according to our knowledge, but partly also according to our ignorance; hence the probable need not be true, or even possible in the strict sense.

Our doctrine may now be summarized in scholastic phraseology. The possibilities of things are all derived from God, the first Actuality: they are in His essence *fundamentaliter*, and *eminenter*: they are in His intellect *formaliter*, they are in His will, so far as He wills them, *executive*, though the complete accuracy of the last adverb depends on whether we make a distinction between God's will and His omnipotence or Almighty power, as efficient cause.<sup>8</sup>

Pure empiricists and some others will object to such doctrine that it labours under the inborn vice of all Metaphysics, the presumption of settling, by a *priori* method, which can be settled either by experience only, or not at all.<sup>9</sup> We fully allow that in the *concrète* and in particular instances we can determine the possibilities of things in no other way than by observing their activities. But our problem

<sup>8</sup> Lessius, *De Perfectionibus Divinis*, Lib. V. c. ii.

<sup>9</sup> Lotze, *Metaphysics*, Bk. I. c. vii. § 85. (English Translation.)

has not been to settle a single determinate thing as either possible or impossible: all we have sought to discover is the great root of every finite possibility, and we are quite indifferent whether it be this or that. Not one statement of physical science have we pretended to settle *a priori*, our inquiry has been wholly metaphysical; it has been the inquiry into *Whence is possibility?* not into *What things are possible?* For our investigation we required to know, but did not assume as known *a priori*, God's relation to finite objects: we borrowed that knowledge from a treatise which makes it matter of laborious proof. That relation once understood, our task became one of simple deduction from the given principles; in the course of which work we have not violated, but merely have not come across the vaunted principle of the *novum organon*: "Man, as nature's minister and interpreter, can do and understand only so much as he has observed in nature; beyond this he can do and understand nothing."

Lest our teaching should be thought to be exclusively scholastic, we will give a specimen of the same doctrine as delivered by the mouth of a professor who thought scholasticism a fetter upon the freedom of intellect: "From Plato to Leibnitz," says Cousin,<sup>10</sup> "the greatest metaphysicians have held that Absolute Truth is the attribute of the Absolute Being. Investigate nature, ascend to the laws which govern it, and which make it, so to speak, a living truth; the deeper you dive into these laws, the nearer you approach to God." And from

<sup>10</sup> *Du Vrai, du Beau, et du Bien*, Leçon iv.

Leibnitz he takes the words: "It is asked, Where would these ideas be, if there existed no spirit to give to them a solid and sure foundation as eternal truths? Thus you are led to the ultimate ground of all truth, to the Sovereign Spirit that cannot but exist, in whose intelligence the eternal truths have their abode, after the manner which St. Augustine has vividly described. Lest, however, it should be fancied that there is no need to have recourse to such an origin, be it observed that these necessary truths contain the determining plan and the regulative principle of existent things themselves; in a word, they give the laws of the universe. It follows that, since they are prior to the existence of contingent natures, they must have had their foundation in some necessarily existing substance."

The importance to philosophy of this doctrine about the origin of possibilities is very great; and a reference to the above principles will often clear up a perplexity, shedding light where else hopeless obscurity would prevail. To have fully established even that possibilities do not account for themselves, but need some real foundation, is a great step; it lands on firm ground for future progress. Henceforth we adhere closely to the truths that possibilities differ from nothing, in the blankest sense of the word; and that they already possess a virtual existence in the power of the agents that can bring them into actuality, and in the intrinsic actuability of their own nature.

(4) There is an author who admits the ordinary scholastic view about God's primacy in the order



of existences, and yet so innovates upon the usual deductions therefrom, that his error will serve to emphasize the true conclusions in a matter of the greatest moment. Perhaps not without some connexion with his confusion between *assent* of the judgment and *consent* of the will, whereby he regarded affirmation and negation as acts of the latter faculty, Descartes asserted that ultimate possibilities depended on the free choice of God, to such an extent that another determination on His part might have made the opposites of all our present necessary truths to be true. In his *Réponses aux Objections*, n. 8, Descartes argues that God, who cannot but choose the best, would not have been free to create, if the possibilities of creation had presented degrees of perfection, antecedently to the settlement, by God's arbitrary decision, of what is good and what is less good or bad. "For if any element of good had shown itself prior to God's determination of what was to be, it would undoubtedly have moved Him to do what was best."<sup>11</sup> But the fact is the other way about; because God has decreed to make the things which are in the world, therefore it is said in Genesis, 'They are very good;' in other words, the reason of their goodness rests on the Divine will to have made them what they are. It is useless for us to vex ourselves with the question whether God from eternity could have settled that twice four should not be eight; for I allow, this passes

<sup>11</sup> Compare Leibnitz's argument that no two things can be perfectly similar, because God would have no reason to choose one rather than another.

our comprehension; but as on the other side I understand very well that nothing of any sort can exist which does not depend upon God, and that He could easily have arranged things so that man could conceive no other arrangement possible; it is quite contrary to reason to doubt about what we fully understand, because of something else which we do not understand, and which, though we may fail to see the fact, it was not likely that we should understand. Thus, then, the eternal truths depend only on God's will; they are as the Supreme Law-giver has from eternity determined that they should be." So teaches Descartes on a most vital question. The ruinous consequence of his system is that he has left himself without any fixed point on which truth or goodness may rest. If the true and the good are simply what God settles they are to be, and His settlement is quite arbitrary, with no ground for choice on one side rather than on another, what becomes of God's own essential truth and goodness? Why cannot He have decreed that lying is good, and have made His own revelation accordingly? Why may He not make us the sport of perpetual delusion? What if He had ordained that religion should consist in blaspheming Himself, and that to reverence Him should be the very depth of wickedness? What becomes of that indispensable element in every philosophy which is at all tenable—a basis of absolutely fixed principles? Descartes simply subverts all reason by pretending to ground truth ultimately on an indifferent choice between what is to be truth and what is to be falsehood, without

any prior claim of one side over the other. An appreciation of the ruinous result will inspire a greater esteem for the common doctrine of the schoolmen in regard to the necessary, immutable character of all ultimate possibilities. These are necessary and immutable with God's own necessity and immutability. Of previous writers, Descartes might have singled out Ockam,<sup>12</sup> to lend some countenance to his views—a service which that author would have rendered by neglecting to find a foundation for intrinsic, as distinguished from extrinsic possibility, and by simply referring possibility to Divine Omnipotence. But Ockam is an author who could not be appealed to with much effect, because of his notorious defects; and his failure to pay proper attention to the intrinsic possibility was just the omission of a point which is of capital importance in the whole question. Intrinsic possibility is a reality that needs accounting for after a manner quite as rational as is the manner of account which we render for extrinsic: it cannot be taken for a mere nothing, nor yet, as Wolf takes it, for a sort of self-settled law, which still would hold though God ceased to exist. If it had this independent validity, then God in creation would have been obliged to work *by a strictly limiting rule, which had no origin in Himself*, and to which He would therefore be in literal subjection. But, it may be asked, is not God somehow so subject? for by what are the possibilities of His own nature

<sup>12</sup> In Lib. I. Distinct. xliii. q. ii. Silvester Maurus is of like mind. (*Quæst. Philosoph.* q. xvii.)

determined, if not by some necessity, at least logically prior to His own existence? There is no such priority, for in God there is no potentiality; and if ever we speak of the possibility of the Divine nature, as legitimately we may,<sup>13</sup> it cannot be in the full sense that is applicable to all things else, which come under the rule *prius est posse esse quam esse*—"to be possible comes before to be." God gives the law to all things possible, and thereby makes them subordinate: but He cannot fall under the same law so as to be subordinate to Himself. Should any one try here to puzzle us by bringing in the principle of excluded middle, "God either is possible or He is not possible," we choose the second horn of the dilemma, provided we are allowed to explain, that "possible," according to the use of it supposed by the objector, is taken to include the idea of past or present potentiality, and that its contradictory, "not possible," is different from "impossible." God therefore is "not possible" in the sense that He is above the conditions of potentiality. The only way in which we should be likely to need the phrase, "God is possible," would be as the conclusion of an argument to prove, that an infinite, self-existent Being, One, intelligent, and Supreme over all things, is not a self-repugnant notion. But even this inference has to be drawn from the proved *fact* of God's existence, not from an *a priori* consideration of the several

<sup>13</sup> In Pure Logic we come across the four "modalities"—*necessity, contingency, impossibility, possibility*: in which enumeration *possibility* is so taken as to include the case of the Divine nature. This fact appears by the distinction of possibility from contingency.

ideas involved in the description of the Divine nature; and when we thus declare God to be *possible*, no potentiality is involved. The term has reference only to the clearing away of the human error, that a God, such as Theism asserts, *cannot be*; we refute the *cannot be* by establishing the *possibility*.

In explanation of a mistake like that of Ockam, we may consider the kindred mistake of Storchenau,<sup>14</sup> who says, "Even on the hypothesis that God did not exist, propositions of the following kind would remain valid, 'There is no contradiction between the essential notes of such and such an object;' 'Things would still have their internal possibility.'" A common but very misleading fallacy is here detectable. It is right to affirm that one who had not yet admitted God's existence might recognize certain necessary truths as self-evidently necessary: he might be sure about some intrinsic possibilities or impossibilities. But observe the vast difference between the two propositions: "Without a previous recognition of God, the mind can recognize a certain truth:" and, "On the hypothesis that no God existed, a certain truth would still remain true." Surely it is one thing to say, "A building may be proved to be stable, though its foundations have not been explored," and another to say, "That building would remain stable though its foundations were removed."

(6) In Pure Logic some authors recognize only four "modals," possibility and impossibility, neces-

<sup>14</sup> *Ontologia*, sect. ii. c. i.

sity and contingency: wherein we have a sufficient reminder, after treating of possible Being, to add a few words about Being regarded as necessary and contingent. Already in *First Principles*<sup>15</sup> we had much to say about necessity; now in *Ontology* we must return to the idea. We take it as established that God is the primal, absolutely necessary Being; all other beings, as they depend for their creation on His free choice, are contingent, existing as matters of fact, whereas they need not have existed. Besides absolute necessity there is a lower grade of necessity, following on a hypothesis. It is at least running a great risk of false doctrine when hypothetical necessity is made the only kind to which the term necessity should be given. Yet we find Mr. F. Bradley<sup>16</sup> writing thus: "It is easy to give the general sense in which we use the term *necessity*. A thing is necessary if it be taken not simply in and by itself, but by virtue of something else and because of something else. Necessity carries with it the idea of mediation, of dependency, of inadequacy to maintain an isolated position and to stand and act alone and self-supported. A thing is not necessary when it simply is: it is necessary when it is, or is said to be, *because* of something else." Thus the absolute Being of God would be the one negation of necessity, for He alone of all Beings is not "because of something else." Afterwards Mr. Bradley excludes the term necessity from the region of reality.<sup>17</sup> "Reality in itself is neither necessary, nor possible, nor again impossible. These predicates

<sup>15</sup> P. 68.<sup>16</sup> *Principles of Logic*, p. 183.<sup>17</sup> P. 197.

(we must suppose in Logic) are not found as such outside our reflexion. And to a knowledge and reflexion that had command of the facts nothing would ever appear *possible*. The real would seem necessary, the unreal would seem impossible." However, leaving the real, and keeping strictly to the logical,<sup>18</sup> "in logic we find that a necessary truth is really an inference, and an inference is nothing but a necessary truth." Lotze again is one who has set the example of limiting the term necessary to mental processes:<sup>19</sup> "Necessity, if not confined to a necessity of thought on our part, but extended to that which is expressly held to be the unconditioned condition of all that is conditioned, would have simply no assignable meaning, and would have to be replaced by the notion of a *de facto* universal validity." The tremendous issues that turn on the idea "necessity," must be our justification for yet further illustrations showing how different is the sense in which it is admitted by some non-scholastic authors from the meaning given to it by scholastics. Mr. Bosanquet<sup>20</sup> affirms that "absolute

<sup>18</sup> P. 221.

<sup>19</sup> *Metaphysics*, Bk. I. c. vii. § 89. Hume, as is well known, makes necessity a mental creation, Mr. Huxley's "shadow of the mind's throwing." The former understood by necessity only constancy of sequence, or of association between "ideas in the imagination:" he abolished all efficient causality. In the same spirit Comte denied our competence to inquire into genuine causes, beyond mere sequences of phenomena.

<sup>20</sup> *Logic*, Vol. II. p. 213. He also says, "So far as a context is necessary it is not self-sufficing, but it is a consequence of something else." Hegel does not allow this view. (*Logic of Hegel*, pp. 230, 235.)

necessity is a *contradiction in adjecto*, because all necessity is *ex hypothesi* conditional." As was to be expected, a similar change is made in the word "free," which no longer stands for the liberty of election that we conceive to be the meaning of the term. The mind is said to be a "free agent," because it is not one of the phenomenal relations that go to make up nature; it distinguishes itself from them, and is their producer, not their product. For example, Green tells us in his *Prolegomena Ethica*, "Those relations which we are apt to treat as independent entities under the name of matter and motion, are relations existing for a consciousness, *which they do not so condition, as that it should itself either move or be material*:" man has "freedom of intelligence," "as *knowing* he is a free cause." Again he insists, with regard to intellect, "The agent must act absolutely from itself in the action through which the world is—not, as does everything else in the world, under determination by something else. The world has no character but that given to it by this action. *This is what we mean by calling the agent a free cause.* Our action in knowledge—the action by which we connect successive phenomena in the unity of a related whole—is an action absolutely from itself, as little to be accounted for by the phenomena which through it become intelligent experience, or by anything alien to itself, as that which we have found to be implied in the existence of the universal order." We, on the other hand, teach that the ground indeed of freedom is in man's natural knowledge, but that only the will is free.



That there exist these great differences in the use of terms between our adversaries and ourselves, it is most important distinctly to observe, lest mutual misunderstandings should go on indefinitely increasing. It is not, however, needful that we here should try further to investigate the enemy's position. From the principles which we have already laid down in explaining possible Being, we will proceed very briefly but clearly to draw out our own account of necessary Being, leaving for Natural Theology the deeper development of that notion.

We affirm, then, that in Ontology the phrase "necessary Being" has a distinct and evidently valid meaning. It stands primarily to designate the Being of God, the only Being that is quite necessary in the order of existence. His existence or non-existence was never a matter of contingency. He unconditionally, absolutely must be, not because of any extrinsic reason, but because of His own intrinsic nature. The necessity so predicated of God is eminently a real characteristic, and a very important one: no other first principle of Being is rationally conceivable than the Supremely Necessary Being.

The second sort of necessity is a consequent necessity: a necessity following only upon the verification of some hypothesis. Thus there is a physical necessity in the sequence of natural phenomena, given that a certain number of elements have been created, with definite laws of action, and with definite positions relatively to each other in space. It is not free to such combinations to do otherwise

than they do : there is no contingency in the results after the conditions have been posited.

Contingent, as opposed to necessary, does not require freedom in the object that is called contingent, but it does imply freedom somewhere or other. Any part of the material universe is contingent, inasmuch as it is not of the very essence of such a collection of substances and forces to exist: the ultimate determinant of its existence, as opposed to its non-existence, was the free-will of the Creator.

The above doctrines about Necessity and Contingency in Being are obvious enough on our principles: they are hardly contested within systems of philosophy that agree substantially with ours: but differences do arise when we meet with men who utterly disagree with our theory of knowledge and of reality. It cannot, therefore, be too carefully remarked that our view of the nature of intellect; and of its power to know things in themselves, which are quite other than our own conscious selves, is decisive of our position in matters of Ontology.<sup>21</sup>

(7) A useful addition may here be made to the account which we gave in a previous chapter about essence: for the matters which we have just been explaining enable us to say, what we were not prepared to say before, how it is that even finite

<sup>21</sup> Lotze remarks: "The adoption of the word freedom to indicate the other sort of quality expressly recognized as merely *de facto*—the reality of that which might just as well not be, is to be explained by ideas derived from the philosophy of religion. Taken as a whole, the theory is an open expression of that Dualism which I find wholly unthinkable."

essences are sometimes described to be eternal, necessary, and immutable. Clearly the meaning is not that any created nature eternally and necessarily exists, or that the scholastic teaching about essential, substantial changes, is revoked by the assertion of immutability in all essences. It is of essences considered in the region of possibility, or in their intrinsic, metaphysical character, apart from the contingent facts of their actual, physical, concrete existence, that eternity, necessity, and immutability are predicated. In other words, the doctrine is about the *ens essentialæ* as explained in the first chapter. An actual essence of the created order, though not eternal or necessary, may be called immutable in the sense that, as such, it cannot be changed without ceasing to be the particular essence it is, and giving place to some other ; it is, however, mutable, inasmuch as its accidents may vary.

#### NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) In the same way that we find the ancients puzzling their heads over Being, we find them also inventing almost unintelligible subtleties about Possibility. The Stoics, who ought in consistency to have limited the possible to what, at some time or other, becomes actual, nevertheless tried, as we see in the teaching of Chrysippus, to reconcile with their doctrine of fatalistic necessity, a belief in some possibilities that are never actualized<sup>1</sup>—more especially a belief that the evil-doer among men is responsible for not acting other-

<sup>1</sup> Zeller's *Stoics and Epicureans*, c. vii. p. 168 ; c. v. p. 111, in footnote ; *Socratic Schools*, c. xii. p. 232. It must be confessed that the argument called *κρυπτόν* stands for different things with different people. See Hamilton, *Logic*, Vol. I. 464 ; Mansel's *Aldrich*, p. 151.

wise than he does. The Megarics again were philosophers who got themselves entangled in some very awkward mazes; a specimen of which we have in the obscure argument called *κυριεύων*, and invented by Diodorus. It rests on the assertion that the three following propositions cannot be held consistently together: (i.) "From the possible there never follows the impossible:" (ii.) "What has happened in the past cannot be other than it has been:" (iii.) "Something is possible which neither has been nor will be actualized." While Chrysippus denied the first of the three, Diodorus deduced the falsehood of the third from the other two, which he admitted. His argument was:<sup>2</sup> "From anything possible nothing impossible can result; but it is impossible that the past can be different from what it is; for had it been possible at a past moment, something impossible would have resulted from something possible. It was, therefore, never possible; and generally speaking it is impossible that anything should happen different to what has happened." The reader need not rack his brain over this sophism; but there may be some to whom this little historic fragment has an interest of some kind or other.

(2) The bearings of our theory of possibility on the proposition that "every Being is true," as also on the idealistic theory, that the truth of all the reality in the universe is constituted by conscious mind, are very close; for we make the possible and the intelligible essentially coincident. This view is largely insisted upon by philosophers of different schools, as for example, by Cudworth: "The entity of all theoretical truth is nothing else but clear intelligibility, and whatever is clearly conceived is an entity and a truth: but that which is false Divine power itself cannot make to

<sup>2</sup> Zeller, l.c.

be clearly and distinctly understood.”<sup>3</sup> Reid indeed quotes and criticizes unfavourably the doctrine: but after adducing other authors who speak in the like sense, he remarks,<sup>4</sup> that he had “never found one that called it in question.” Of course it is easy enough to make pretence at conceiving the impossible, but the terms of the conception will never be united in thought. All that we are concerned to defend is, that every possible object is, of its own nature, conceivable, and that no really conceivable object is impossible, though we may by abstraction conceive only a portion of it, which by itself alone, without other portion or portions, could not exist.

(3) In the case of free agents we come across a special sort of impossibility, called “moral impossibility;” on which, though the action might absolutely be done, the difficulty of doing it is so great that we cannot expect it to be done. For example, there is a degree of attention to one’s occupation which could not be justly exacted, not because it could not be reached by an extraordinary effort, but because it is beyond what is possible by ordinary effort; and ordinary effort, as we will suppose, is all that the gravity of the case demands. Of moral impossibilities some approach nearer, some less near, to absolute impossibility: if they reach absolute impossibility, then they become likewise physical impossibilities. For example, that an ordinary Christian should say frequent prayers, and never for a whole year have a distraction, is an impossibility at once moral and physical. In these matters, however, the use of words is not uniform: and we should not be too ready to condemn another man’s expressions till we have made sure of their meaning, or of their want of clear meaning.

<sup>3</sup> *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> *Intellectual Powers*, Essay iv. c. iii. p. 377.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE IN BEING.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) The true notion of the Finite and the Infinite.
- (2) False doctrines about the Infinite. (a) That there is no such thing, or at least no such notion. (b) That the notion is made up empirically by the addition of finite quantities. (c) That the notion can only be innate.
- (3) Admittedly real difficulties connected with the notion of the Infinite; especially in regard to the so-called "sum of all possibilities."

THERE is one more division of Being which we must discuss, before we pass on to the second book of this treatise: it is the partition of Being into Infinite and Finite. Straightway some readers will be inclined to limit our inquiry to the one aspect of space, as though infinity in extension were the only meaning of the term; and, therefore, we wish distinctly to forestall such misconception, because otherwise it may do a great deal to prevent our words from being rightly understood. We have already used "perfection" as in some way synonymous with Being; and if we say that our present investigation concerns the difference between infinite and finite perfection in things, we shall be conveying a much truer notion than if we spoke as though

endless space and limited space were the two special objects of our interest.

(1) The amount of discussion that has gone on in the world about the finite and the infinite has been appalling, not simply on account of its vastness, but more still because of the bewildering nature of many of the speculations into which philosophers have wandered. It will, therefore, be well to open the discussion by as concise an account of the two ideas as possible, in order that the reader, having distinctly before his mind what he ought to mean by the finite and the infinite, may be enabled afterwards to take a few peeps into the wilderness of confusion, with a steady confidence that it need not frighten him.

We began this treatise by making quite clear to ourselves the signification and the reality of *Being*; also we have, in various ways, been brought across the idea of *negation* or *limit*; we need only put these two elements together, and we obtain the notion of *finite Being*. That we ourselves are such Beings is brought home most certainly to our consciousness by means of reflexion, no matter how earnestly pantheists or monists may labour to persuade us of our identification with the infinite.

The notion of Infinite Being is what we have next to make clear. The success of the effort will not depend on the number of pages over which we extend our account; if a few sentences amply suffice for our purpose, all the better, except for the danger there is lest what is contained within the compass of a single page should fail to secure the attention

which it deserves, because it covers only one page. It would be insulting to the reader to print in large capitals, or have fingers drawn, pointing to the short passages that are important beyond the measure of their length; but we may respectfully invite careful advertence to the following paragraph which contains, substantially, all the positive doctrine that *General Metaphysics* has to deliver about the Infinite. In *Natural Theology* the subject has to be further developed with painful elaboration.

Before, by denying more than a certain degree of perfection to Being we got finite Being; and now if we deny our previous denial, and assert unlimitedness of Being, we have got the idea of the Infinite, provided we can satisfy one peremptory condition. We must give guarantee that our new phrase is not self-contradictory; and this we cannot do by a simple inspection and comparison of the two terms, "unlimited" and "Being." Therefore we borrow from the treatise to which we have so frequently to make recourse: we take from *Natural Theology* the proposition that there actually exists an Infinite God, according to inferences that are convincingly drawn. Thereupon, what otherwise would have been no better than the suggestion of an idea, becomes a real idea, and we are assured that our conception of "unlimited Being" is valid. It is not a mere subterfuge like the pretence to pile finite upon finite till the Infinite is reached: it commits us to no assertion that the finite is made up of parts; it gives us simply Being which, as such, is not confined within any bounds. While the idea so



formed really does attain to its object, we are free to confess that it does so after a very imperfect mode, because it has to proceed by way of negation, instead of positive intuition; and though the negation, inasmuch as it is the negation of a negation, that is, of a limit, is so far turned into something positive, yet for all that it does not give us a direct positive conception of the infinite. Later on we shall allow for all shortcomings, but here we are insisting upon the success of our enterprise, so far as we have achieved a success. We may now turn to the failures of others, which will take us more time to consider, for error is often more roundabout than truth.

(2) (a) Some of the old pagan systems, even though they do not explicitly deny the existence of the Infinite, implicitly deny it by allowing only a finite quantity of material elements and certain presiding spirits whose attributes declare them to be certainly finite. Others argue that existence means determinate existence; that all determination is limitation; and that, therefore, there can be nothing actual which is not bounded.

It is, however, to the denial of our power to conceive the Infinite that we may more profitably turn, because the arguments on this side have about them a greater show of reason. Hobbes in his rough leviathan-like way, quite ignoring the distinction between sensitive and intellectual powers, thinks to crush, as with a sledge-hammer, man's pretence to know the Infinite.<sup>1</sup> "Whatsoever we

<sup>1</sup> *Leviathan*, Bk. I. c. iii. p. 17.

*imagine* is finite. Therefore, there is no *idea* or *conception* of anything we call infinite. No man can have in his mind an *image* of infinite *magnitude*, nor conceive infinite *swiftness*, infinite *time*, or infinite *force*." The identification here of imagination, of the sensitive picturing of infinite magnitude or velocity, with the intellectual conception of the infinite is very characteristic. We all allow that we cannot picture the Infinite; nor are we concerned to defend the conceivableness of an infinite magnitude, nor yet of infinity in any material order. Hence we quite disagree with the principles of a man who, as Hobbes does, acknowledges no other actuality but what he calls "body." He continues, "When we say anything is infinite, we signify only that we are not able to conceive the ends or bounds of the things named; having no conception of the thing, but of our inability. And, therefore, the name of God is used, not to make us conceive Him, for He is incomprehensible; but that we may honour Him. Also because whatsoever we conceive has been perceived first by sense, a man can have no thought representing anything not subject to sense. No man, therefore, can conceive anything, but he must conceive it in some place and endowed with some determinate magnitude." All contrary declarations "are absurd speeches, taken upon credit, without any signification at all, from deceived philosophers and deceived or deceiving schoolmen."

While differing widely from Hobbes as to the power of intellect above sense, Hamilton agrees with him that we cannot conceive the Infinite.

For, he contends, "to conceive is to condition ;" hence to think the Infinite would be to condition the unconditioned, or to destroy it. Nevertheless, we are bound to *believe* the Infinite, "believing what we cannot prove," for "we have but *faith*, we cannot *know*."<sup>2</sup> Our attempt to conceive the Infinite reveals "a mere impotence," "the negation of a concept," "a fasciculus of negations." With these assertions Hamilton would have to reconcile what he says in his *Logic*: "The manifestation of belief necessarily involves knowledge; for we cannot believe without some consciousness or knowledge of the belief, and consequently some consciousness or *knowledge of the object of belief*."<sup>3</sup> This is rational, but it warns us off the statement that simply we cannot *know* the Infinite. Hamilton, however, is here pledged to a principle, which occupies a great place in his system, and which he could not forego without a notable retreat from a position long stoutly maintained."<sup>4</sup> "The sum of what I have stated," he says, "is that the conditioned is that which alone is conceivable or cogitable; the unconditioned is that which is inconceivable or incogitable. The conditioned or the thinkable lies between two extremes or poles, and these extremes or poles are each of them unconditioned, each of them inconceivable, each of them exclusive or contradictory of the other. Of these two repugnant opposites the one is that of unconditional or absolute limitation, the other that of unconditional or infinite illimitation." For example,

<sup>2</sup> *In Memoriam*, Introductory Stanzas.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. IV. Lect. xxvii. p. 73.      <sup>4</sup> *Metaphys.* Lect. xxxviii. p. 373.

neither can we conceive a finite object which is an *absolute* whole or an *absolute* part, nor can we conceive an *infinite* object, "for this could only be done by an infinite synthesis in thought of finite wholes, which would itself require an infinite time for its accomplishment."<sup>5</sup> Here precisely we catch Hamilton tripping; for addition of finites is not the only mode that man has of attempting the idea of the Infinite, since we have already given another and a valid mode. And this is the sufficient refutation of Hamilton, whose appeal to Aristotle's<sup>6</sup> "The Infinite is unknowable as Infinite;" "The Infinite is the object neither of the reasoning nor of

<sup>5</sup> *Discussions*, p. 13. "In our opinion the mind can conceive and consequently can know, only the *conditionally limited*. The *unconditionally unlimited* or the Infinite, and the *unconditionally limited*, or the Absolute, cannot positively be construed to the mind: they can be conceived only by thinking away from, or abstraction of, those very conditions under which thought itself is realized: consequently the notion of the unconditioned is only negative—the negative of the conceivable itself. For example, we can positively conceive, neither an absolute whole, that is, a whole so great that we cannot also conceive it as a relative part of a still greater whole; nor an absolute part, that is, a part so small that we cannot conceive it as a relative whole divisible into smaller parts." In further making the Absolute to be the contradictory of the Infinite, Hamilton only adds to the evidence that he is misconceiving the two: "*Absolutum* means *finished, perfected, completed*: it thus corresponds to the τὸ ὅλον and τὸ τέλειον of Aristotle. In this acceptance—and it is that in which I myself exclusively use it—the Absolute is diametrically opposed to, is contradictory of, the Infinite." Our doctrine is, that if we take the Absolute to be that which is complete in its own nature, then the Absolute may be either infinite, as in the case of the Divine nature, or finite, as in the case of any created nature.

<sup>6</sup> τὸ ἀπείρον ἐγνωστον ἢ ἀπείρον—τὸ ἀπείρον οὔτε νοητὸν, οὔτε αἰσθητὸν.

the perceptive faculty," will not avail him against the fact that mankind have actually hit upon a means of conceiving the Infinite, which manifestly does attain to the Infinite itself—to the whole Infinite, though not to a comprehensive, exhaustive knowledge of its nature. No parts of it are left out, for it has no parts; still the conception is partial in the sense that while it seizes the whole object it does not wholly comprehend its nature.

In behalf of Hamilton, the defence which his pupil Mansel has to make ought fairly to be heard, but it cannot be admitted to satisfy all requirements. He contends<sup>7</sup> that Mill's attack is beside the mark, for his great objection is, that Hamilton, instead of addressing himself to the consideration of the concrete thing which is supposed to be Absolute or Infinite, tries to prove "the unmeaning abstractions to be unknowable;" whereas the truth is that "Hamilton maintains the terms Absolute and Infinite to be perfectly intelligible as *abstractions*, as much so as Relative and Finite, but denies that *a concrete thing* can possibly be conceived as absolute or infinite." The abstractions are knowable, "in the only sense in which abstractions can be known, by understanding the meaning of their names;" but this meaning cannot be intelligently applied by man to a concrete example, because "in order to conceive the unconditioned *existing as a thing*, we must conceive it as existing out of relation to every thing else, as one, simple, and universal." The apology cannot be accepted, for the word Absolute

<sup>7</sup> *The Philosophy of the Conditioned*, pp. 110, 102, 103.

certainly can be applied to an object without excluding from it all relation; the thing may be absolute under one aspect, relative under another. This is clear enough in regard to finite natures: and with respect to God, if we pass over the Trinity as belonging to Revelation, all should admit that the Creator enters into *what are conceived as relations* to His creatures; and if many theologians refuse to call these relations *real*, it is only to save the appearance of asserting any intrinsic change within the immutable God, or any real dependency. Others, with the proviso, that the Divine attributes are to be kept inviolate, say that the relation may be called real, in order to signify that creation on the part of God is most really His work, though He does not work after our way of passing from potency to act and of depending on materials.

As a further instance of the view, that man can form no intelligible notion of the Infinite, we may appeal to sermon literature, where we shall find Kingsley addressing these words to a Christian public:<sup>8</sup> "It is said God is infinite and absolute, and how can the finite comprehend the Infinite? These are fine words, but I do not care to understand them. I do not deny that God is infinite or absolute, though what that means I do not know. But I find nothing about His being infinite and absolute in the Bible. I find there that He is righteous, just, loving, merciful, and forgiving: and that He is angry, too, and that His wrath is a con-

<sup>8</sup> *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, Sermon II. Compare Dr. Martineau's *Study of Religion*, Vol. I. pp. 400—416; Vol. II. p. 148.

suming fire ; and I know well enough what these words mean." It is not the way of Scripture to use philosophic terms to express a doctrine ; but there are plenty of texts setting forth the illimitableness of the Divine Being, and these are taken by the early Christian Fathers to mean that God is infinite, so that literally "of His greatness there is no end."<sup>9</sup>

From Hamilton's doctrine that we must believe God infinite, though we can form no conception of the Infinite God, onwards to Kingsley's opinion, that a word which for us is empty of meaning need not be held to declare a Divine attribute, the step is very easy. Dr. Martineau<sup>10</sup> goes further still : his view is that instead of creation out of nothing we must assume a sort of chaotic matter, coeval with God ; and his answer to Spencer's argument about the unknowableness of the Absolute is, that it is enough to know God in His relation to His creatures. "True, God, so regarded, will not in the rigorous, metaphysical sense, be absolutely infinite. But we know no reason why He should be : and must leave it to the schoolmen who worship such abstractions, to go into mourning at the discovery." For Catholics, however, the Vatican Council has inserted among its decrees a passage to the effect, that God is a God of infinite perfection, the grounds for which doctrine may be found in theological treatises, *De Deo*,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Psalm cxliv. 3.

<sup>10</sup> See the places lately referred to ; also the *Essays*. Yet in his own way, Dr. Martineau does teach that God is Infinite.

<sup>11</sup> Kleutgen gives the arguments in brief, *De Deo*, p. 186.

while the meaning of the term "infinite" must be gathered, not from Hamilton, or Kingsley, or Dr. Martineau, but from the philosophy which the Church uses.

The Hamiltonian teaching about the inconceivability of the Infinite, which has become widely diffused in this country, and which Professor Huxley has lately described as having exercised a great influence philosophically on his youthful mind, is akin to, but not identical with, the Kantian distinction between the understanding, which judges only according to the finite categories, and the reason which has regulative ideas about the infinite, such, however, that we can speculatively assert no real object corresponding to these subjective ideas. Hegel, who kept the distinction between understanding and reason, represented the true Infinite as not other than the finite, but as that into which all finite objects are absorbed by the identifying reason. He blames Kant for separating the infinite from the finite, and making it a "transcendent," or an object beyond the reach of human intelligence. Nevertheless, Kant's antinomies or contradictions have largely prevailed: and they give Mr. Spencer, at the beginning of his *First Principles*, his chief grounds for asserting the basis of things to be the Unknowable.

(b) Next to the explicit rejection of a true notion, is its implicit rejection by describing it in a way fatal to its essence: and such is a description of the Infinite to which we have already referred, and which makes it out to be the result of an indefinite



addition of finite quantities. This intellectual piling of Pelion upon Ossa to some may seem a very sublime effort: but there is much truth in Hegel's sarcasm against Locke on this point; that we must abandon the occupation not because it is too sublime, but because it is too tedious. Locke's teaching is<sup>12</sup> that "finite and infinite are looked on as modifications of expansion," and that "as by the power we find in ourselves of repeating as often as we will any idea of space, we get the idea of immensity, so by being able to repeat the idea of any length of duration, we come by the idea of eternity." Really this process never brings us up to the notion of infinity: it leaves us at some finite point, whence we look forward to a possible advance indefinitely extending: but this is the *indefinite*, not the *infinite*. At most it might be regarded as implying or presupposing the Infinite: for, to take the example of space, if we assert that no matter how we add space to space in our imagination, we can always go further in our additions, we do in some sort insinuate that there is *an unlimited expanse* to draw upon. If the idea does not involve self-contradiction, about which there are grave doubts, then our way of conceiving infinite space would be precisely *by denying all limit to it*. Locke, however, omits this most necessary element in the process, and contents himself with the indefinitely numerous parts. We are not, therefore, surprised to find the patrons of this system equivalently admitting that they have not got an idea of the Infinite, but only

<sup>12</sup> *Human Understanding*, Bk. II. c. xvii.

a substitute for it; a fact which appears in Mr. Calderwood's polemic against Hamilton. "It does not follow," he writes, "that since we have not a clear and definite knowledge of the Infinite, we can have no knowledge at all; we can have an indefinite knowledge of it; our notion of the Infinite is a notion of that to which there is always something beyond." To call the notion indefinite is to spoil it; only when a previously determinate notion of the Infinite has been formed, can we describe it as something such that, no matter what finite greatness we assign to it, "there is always something beyond." This latter description is a secondary account of the Infinite, and is insufficient in itself, though, as we shall see presently, it has some authority in Aristotle. Again, if we carry out the Lockian theory in Mr. Sheddon's fashion,<sup>13</sup> and compare the acquisition of the idea of the Infinite to climbing a mountain, which ever presents new peaks to our ascending energies, then, with the same author, we must admit that "the Infinite is for ever beyond our grasp." He "*believes* in its existence," but he destroys the notion by which the object of the belief is expressed.

(c) To assert that the idea of the Infinite is innate in man, is about the only resort left for those who, on the one hand, firmly hold that he has the conception, and on the other, that his single way of endeavouring to acquire it for himself by experience must be through the addition of finite to finite. Descartes is a representative of the *a priori*

<sup>13</sup> *Three Philosophical Essays*, Essay i. in initio.

theory of thinking: he maintains that only the Infinite Being could have infused into our finite minds the knowledge of Infinity. From such an inference we dissent; but otherwise what Descartes has to remark upon the subject is not without some valuable hints. "As God alone," he says,<sup>14</sup> "is the only true cause of all that is and can be, it is clear that we shall be following the best course in our philosophy, if from the knowledge of God Himself we try to deduce the account of the things which He has created. Now that we may do so in security from all danger, we must use the caution always to bear most carefully in mind, that God is infinite and we altogether finite. Hence, if it should happen that God reveal anything to us about His own nature, for examples, the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnation, we shall not refuse to believe these truths which are beyond the reach of our natural apprehension; nor shall we be in the slightest degree surprised, that both in the immensity of His own nature, and in the objects which He has created, there are many things which pass our understanding. Never shall we weary out our minds in disputations about the Infinite; for seeing that we ourselves are finite, it is absurd to suppose that we can come to conclusions about it, and it would be absurd in us to try to bound it within our comprehension. Therefore we shall not be at pains to frame answers to those who ask whether, if a line were infinite, the half of it would also be infinite; or whether an infinite number be

<sup>14</sup> *De Princip. Philosoph.* Pt. I. n. 14.

odd or even; because it seems that no one ought to presume to have ideas on these questions, unless he thinks his own mind to be infinite. We for our part, in regard to all those objects to which, from some aspect, we can discover no limit, shall not indeed call them infinite, but shall look upon them as indefinite. For example, since we cannot imagine an extension so great that it cannot be greater, we shall say that things possible are indefinitely many." Upon this very point we must presently enlarge a little, and the conclusion we shall try to enforce is, that it seems safest to take refuge in the limitations of our powers, and to confess our inability even to ask properly the questions that are supposed to be so effective on one side of a controversy or on another. We have to acknowledge not only insoluble problems, but also problems that we cannot even state adequately. However, before we take up this point, we have a few words to add. The school of philosophers known as ontologists agree with the Cartesians in teaching that we begin with the knowledge of the Infinite, and thence descend to the knowledge of the finite; that our idea of the Infinite is wholly a positive idea, and that the use of the negation comes in when we conceive the finite as the negation of the Infinite. The intuition of God and the infusion of ideas, which are the postulates upon which the doctrines respectively rest, are both contrary to sound psychological principle, or to speak more simply, to the results of the most ordinary examination of experience. We must not assume means which are beyond our powers, but must account for

each notion that we have, by assigning to it such an origin as we discover in the workings of our own mind ; and this we do when we trace our idea of the Infinite to a conception of Being without limit. When, however, we affirm that the notion of the finite comes before that of the Infinite, lest we should seem to deny that correlatives can be known apart, we must allow that a perfect perception of finite requires us to observe that it is the opposite of the Infinite. Still there is a less perfect knowledge of the finite to be had by observing the difference in magnitude between two finite objects. To perceive that one thing is smaller than another gives the idea of limitation ; and even though the idea of illimitation as applicable to Being, do not then and there spring up, a sufficient contrast is at hand to produce the notion of the finite. It may be only later that a deliberate effort is made to give precision to the full contrary opposition of infinite to finite ; then an implicit idea becomes explicit.

(3) Without postulating any innate idea, we have shown how the Infinite can really become an object of our knowledge ; but at the same time, because it was not an intuition, nor any fully comprehensive notion of the object, that we proved to be ours, but only a sort of made-up idea, needing the device of negating all limit, it cannot surprise us, as we have just heard Descartes remark, that our conception of the Infinite leaves many puzzles to perplex the mind. We meet with no downright contradiction of our doctrine : but we do meet with difficulties apparently

beyond our powers of perfect solution. Unsolved difficulties, however, cannot upset the partially acquired truths out of which they spring ; they show only the incompleteness of the knowledge, not that the knowledge is not correct as far as it goes.

The serious difficulties about the Infinite do not so much begin with the One Infinite Being : for He is declared to be without beginning or end, without parts or composition, without change or any potentiality. But when we come to the assertion of an infinite that has not this simple unity, but is supposed to be constituted by finite parts, straightway strong arguments appear against the validity of such a conception. St. Thomas<sup>15</sup> indeed regards it as not demonstrable that creation could not have been from eternity ; but he distinctly says that there cannot be an actually infinite number or multitude, and when he puts to himself the explicit question, " Can the human intellect know an infinity of objects ? " he answers that " it cannot actually know an infinity of objects, without numbering all the parts, and this is an impossibility ; " and that we can know Infinity *in potentia* only, which is defined by Aristotle<sup>16</sup> to be " something such that those who take any quantity of it have always more yet to take." This definition is adopted by others, being rendered by Silvester Maurus<sup>17</sup> as follows : " The infinite is that which always leaves something over and above, so that he who subtracts from its quantity can always take more and more, without ever exhausting the whole."

<sup>15</sup> *Sum.* i. q. vii. a. iv. ; i. q. lxxxvi. a. ii.

<sup>16</sup> *Phys.* iii. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Quaest. Philosoph. Lib.* II. q. xxxiii.

This quantitative infinite is quite a different thing from the infinite perfection of simple Being—simple not in the sense that it is mere Being without determinate attributes that are mentally distinguishable by us, while not really so, but simple in the sense of uncompounded. Hence the Aristotelian definition really explains to us no more than the indefinite; it tells us that no finite magnitude, which we choose to name, will exhaust the possible extension of quantity; but it does not tell us that there is an infinite extension, nor even that infinite extension has a valid meaning. It informs us only that, however far we stretch quantity, we can always stretch it further. It gives us no more guarantee that we can predicate of it infinite greatness, than that we can predicate of it, by reason of its indefinite subdivisibility, infinite smallness, or parts infinitely minute.

The inquiry has its direct bearing on the question of possibilities which we treated in the last chapter. We are asked, Is their sum-total infinite, or finite, or indefinite? If we reply finite, we seem to limit the Divine power; if we reply indefinite, we seem to be using a term that has reference only to human ignorance, and has no application to the Divine knowledge; and therefore the remaining word, infinite, is strongly urged upon our acceptance as the only one eligible. On the threshold we may remark upon a frequent assumption which requires more caution on the part of its friends than it generally receives. It is taken for granted that there must be possible an infinite production as the only

adequate term of omnipotence. But if this principle be urged unqualifiedly, then omnipotence ought to be able to create another God; and inasmuch as what is thus implied is the height of extravagance, we have a right to affirm that God's power of creation has not an absolutely illimitable term for its object. Here is a fact which at least should be borne in mind while we are discussing the so-called sum of all possibilities. Next we may premise, that from the point of view of our limited capacities, "indefinitely many" forms a fair reply when it is asked of us, How many things God can make? Never will so many be assigned in numbers that He cannot produce more. We have the like example of an indefinitely large multitude when we consider the limitless subdivisibility, not perhaps of matter itself, but of abstract, mathematical extension. In it there is no bound assignable by us to the possibility of halving, and halving again, without ever coming to a necessary stoppage. Once more, if it be asked, how many thoughts will go through the mind of a person who is eternally to live and to be mentally active, our powers of framing an answer at least carry us as far as "indefinitely many."

But next, when we no longer consider our limited knowledge, which easily allows of the indefinite, but God's knowledge which seems to exclude infinity, we feel driven to say that God could give a definite reply to the query, "What is the sum of the possibles?" One great advantage which He has over us certainly will enable Him to know an infinite number or multitude, if that expression has an



intelligible meaning. For He does not number things successively: He would not have to pass over successive steps in order to reach an infinite number, if such a number have a real signification. To God, then, perhaps, the sum of all the possibilities is infinite, or rather infinitely infinite, in the sense that He contemplates an infinite number of individuals in each of an infinite number of different kinds.<sup>18</sup>

If by these considerations we could be driven into a plain contradiction, it would be fatal to our philosophy: but if from them it be proved only that about the infinite there are some questions which we cannot satisfactorily, we will not say answer, but propose, then that proves our knowledge to be restricted, but it does not discredit the little that we do understand. If objectors cannot give a sufficiently clear meaning to the inquiries which they are trying to put to us, and by which they seek to reduce us to mental confusion, then the limitation of their and our faculties may be betrayed; but our theory about possibilities may still claim to be unshaken, so far as ever we professed to have established a theory. It is enough, therefore, if we succeed in showing that the almost flippantly made interrogation, "What is the sum of all the possi-

<sup>18</sup> "The right and duty to admit that something is and happens does not depend on our ability, by combining acts of thought, to make it in that fashion in which we should have to present it to ourselves as being or happening. It is enough that the admission is not rendered impossible by inner contradiction, and is rendered necessary by the bidding of experience." (Lotze, *Metaphys.* Bk. II. c. iii. § 143.)

bilities on the supposition that their origin is in an infinite God?" is dark, not with "excess of light," but with defect of light. Perhaps it is absurd. At any rate, we shall content ourselves with maintaining that its want of demonstrable intelligibility in any form which we can give to it, is enough to bar its force as a decisive objection to any doctrine. Others may meet the objection directly, but we shall not attempt more than an indirect defence of our position against the attack.

Recalling, as a thing to be kept in mind, our remark that omnipotence cannot produce another God, we fasten upon the phrase, "sum of all the possibilities," and demand proof that it is not incoherent in its terms. We do not positively affirm that it is incoherent: but we ask to have grave suspicions allayed which are against its coherency.<sup>19</sup> At least it is an obscure combination of words, and we want more clearness. It seems to ask what is the summation of a series which can never end, and which cannot be submitted to any mathematical formula, and which very likely would not gain much if it could be so submitted, because mathematicians proceed by a convention in regard to the infinite, leaving it to philosophers to explain the convention if they can. The mathematician, as such, is quite

<sup>19</sup> "There is no enumeration of infinite numbers, and yet they are not beyond the comprehension of God, whose intelligence is without number." (St. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xii. 18.) "No species of number is infinite, for in every case number is multitude measured by unity." (St. Thomas, *Sum.* i. q. vii. a. iv.) The Conimbricenses take the view that a quantitative infinity can be proved neither possible nor impossible. (In Lib. VI. *Phys.* c. viii. q. ii.)

content to write  $\frac{1}{0} = \infty$ , and sometimes  $\infty - 1 = \infty$ , and despises ultimate explanation, because from his *hypothetical* point of view there is no need of considerations that are in the present case *absolute*. The theory of infinitesimals, or of absolute ultimates in smallness, and the theory of limits—either of these two can be worked by the mathematician, who can work also with what he recognizes to be, and calls, surds. He can allow the symbols for impossible operations to enter into his workings and he ordinarily considers it no necessary part of his business to venture any philosophy about the deeper meaning of  $\sqrt[2]{-1}$ . For him the important point about the infinite is that no finite quantity shall ever be allowed to satisfy its requirements; and, as every one must see, this stipulation is quite consistent with the impossibility of an infinite number, for it exacts no more than the exclusion of a definite limit being set to number in a particular case. Number in this instance is not an infinite source actually existing, which, because it is infinite, enables us to draw upon it indefinitely; it is only a magnitude capable of indefinite expansion, but it is the expansion which gives the magnitude and defines its limits at each stage: we are at liberty to push these stages further and further, but it is a convention when the mathematician supposes them infinitely advanced. We should need a more philosophic explanation of that convention than the bulk of mathematicians care even to attempt, before we could accept their use of the terms as proof that a number literally infinite involves no contradiction, or is not like a

surd. Mathematicians, then, at least leave us unsatisfied; professedly many of them ignore the philosophic difficulties underlying their convention. Suppose, therefore, we try for ourselves to discover what is the meaning of all the possibles. We find that it is often treated as the exhaustive term of inexhaustible power; the summation of an unsummable series, or better perhaps, the last number in an arithmetic progression, which ascends always by an increment of one, and has no last term; the gathering up of all into one collection in spite of the agreement that outside any assignable collection of the individuals, there should always be more left to gather. Word our account of "all the possibles" as we like, when we suppose them gathered into one sum, the cautious mind will be slow to set aside its suspicions about the validity of the expression. However, its defenders rest the case on another consideration. They allow their inability to explain infinite number; they appeal to the parallel instance of infinite Being, which, nevertheless, we admit to be actually existent, though we cannot comprehend it. Against such a subterfuge we have two things to say. First, there are proofs producible for the infinite perfection of God; but as God cannot create another God, there is a want of directness about the argument from His own infinity to show that He can create, or must regard as possible, an infinity of different kinds, or of individuals under any one kind. Second, an infinity of finite objects has difficulties which are avoided in the case of God who is one, indivisible, uncompounded, and perfectly

simple in His essence. Hence with Him there is no constituting the infinite out of parts: whereas the supposed infinity of possibles is the result of an aggregation, which gives rise to endless and hopeless perplexities, when inquiries are made about the results of adding or subtracting units. The infinite number would have to be made up of units, and these are elements which have furnished such difficulties against the number itself that it seems safe to say, they have been satisfactorily answered by no one; all attempt at reply rests on an assumption which cannot rationally be justified. De Morgan is right in his explanation of the numerals: they start, as he affirms, from *one*, and then proceed by the addition of a unit at each successive advance. Thus,

2 is the conventional sign for  $1 + 1$

3       "       "       "        $2 + 1$

4       "       "       "        $3 + 1$

Hence we can never get rid of the difficulties arising from the fact that any number whatsoever is made up of separate units; and these difficulties are serious.

The first Roman numerals are undisguisedly I, II, III.

Here it may be worth while to point out a defect in the expression, that the numerals "tend to infinity." If we say that the asymptote tends to touch its curve, or that a polygon of ever-multiplying sides tends to a circle, the contact with the hyperbola and the contact with the circle are in themselves terms which are most clearly intelligible whatever may be

said of their being reached by the asymptote and the polygon. But if any one says that ever-increasing number "tends to infinity," the ultimate term itself here lacks the clear intelligibility which we admitted in the former cases. It seems rather that the very law of *number*,<sup>20</sup> or if some people prefer the word, of *multitude*, should be that there shall be no term to which it can tend as to its completion; just as it seems the law of the production of parallel lines, that they should always as rigorously preserve their distance, as if an inflexible bar held them apart. They have no law of nearer and nearer approach, such as is apparent in the case of the asymptote.

The force of the above arguments will be missed if the reader forgets that they are purely sceptical, not dogmatic proofs against the possibility of infinite multitude. They insist only on the two facts—that there are unsolved difficulties against such infinity, and that we cannot be compelled to sink these difficulties, because of some proof *aliunde*, that there must be an infinite number or multitude. If certain mathematical results seem to be against the latter assertion, we plead in explanation, that these results depend on *a priori* conventions which, at the time they were made, were not philosophically analysed. The results follow deductively on the convention, but we wait for the fuller analysis of that convention itself. As we have more than once said, and must

<sup>20</sup> Number is defined "multitude measured by unity." To escape this definition some speak only of infinite multitude: but we have no belief in trying to get over a real difficulty by a verbal distinction: it would still remain to justify the assertion of an infinite "multitude."

repeat again because of the undue air of triumph with which the consideration is pressed upon us, the difficulty of the infinite multitude is not on the part of the Divine knowledge of it ; if it be a rational object of thought, God would know it all at once, collectively, without successive summing up of parts. Still the parts would be there and they are the obstacle ; and we are quite unsatisfied in mind when we are told to ignore the parts and regard only the whole, as God would do. We are pertinacious in our assertions ; the parts are there, they make up the whole, and if their very nature appears to throw grave doubt on the rationality of such a whole, to such doubts we will cling until, we will not say our opponents, but our instructors, make their instructions more intelligible to our powers of understanding. For we cannot accept a proposition without some sort of motive, intrinsic or extrinsic to the subject, and such as we can understand.

Our position of *non probatur*, or *not proven*, against those who hold an infinity of possibles may be further illustrated by the failure of the attempt to translate eternity into clear terms of time. If any one likes to say that eternity equals an infinity of years, months, weeks, days, hours, or seconds, he has the power to utter these words, but what do they signify ? and what is their warrant ? and what is the excess of the infinity of years over the infinity of seconds, sixty of which go to each minute ? We should prefer to confess that we do not know how to effect the translation of eternity into time. Similarly we do not know which is the way to

express how God now looks comprehensively upon the thoughts of a creature who is going to elicit thoughts throughout an eternity, that is, who is going to posit a series which will never reach a final limit, though it had a definite starting-point. Efforts to express eternity in measures of time seem to lead us into fallacies comparable, in part, to those whereby Zeno disproved the possibility of motion. Motion continuous, successive, and without actually divided parts was treated more or less like a fixed line, of co-existent parts, along which it might be supposed to take place and have its resting-places. But the fact is we cannot divide continuous motion itself into fixed intervals of rest. Neither have we any right to speak of the *duration* of an indivisible instant, nor to regard a finite duration as made up of instants without duration, nor to make sundry other suppositions which occasionally are made in dealing with those very unique ideas, motion and duration, which are without first *part* or last *part*, without *co-existent parts*, nay, without any actual *part* at all. For motion of its own nature is best conceived under the figure of an evenly-travelling point, which leaves no record behind it, but simply goes ever uniformly forward. On this subject we shall have to speak afterwards; at present we are only calling attention to the fallacy of translating continuously successive motion into co-existence and rest, and we are paralleling it with the fallacy of translating the infinite into the finite.

Balmez has tried to illustrate the difficulties of an infinity of finite parts. He says, in regard to



the assumed divisibility of finite space into infinite parts:<sup>21</sup> "Absurdities if we suppose infinite divisibility, absurdities if we suppose the opposite; obscurities if we admit unextended points, obscurities if we deny them. Victorious in attack, reason is helpless in defence, and unable to maintain an opinion. Nevertheless, reason cannot be in conflict with itself: the proof of two contradictories would be the absolute negation of reason. Therefore, the contradiction is but apparent; but who shall untie for us the knot!"

We maintain that the foundation of the possibilities in an Infinite God leads to no proved contradiction, but only to a question which is suggested, yet seems incapable of clear formulation by the human mind. And when we remember the mere artifice to which we must have recourse, in order that we may have an idea of the infinite, which, while it really attains its object, yet fails to comprehend its inmost nature, we cannot be surprised that about this notion we have intimations of questions to be put, but cannot clearly put them. If we may borrow a rather distant analogy, we may use the illustration of a man who knows sound only as it is heard, but who knows nothing about its mode of propagation in a vibratory medium. He would ask some most unscientific questions about the wonder that there should be a sound apiece for each listener, about the disappearance of the sound as soon as it has been heard, and about other matters equally vexatious to the educated man.

<sup>21</sup> *Fundamental Philosophy*, Bk. III. c. xxiv.

What seems a hopeless inquiry when sound is discussed with no approach to an understanding of its physical conditions, becomes an intelligible question only when an adequate hypothesis has been framed. So we may be hopelessly muddling our brains over the infinite, because our conception of its nature is so very indirect and inadequate. It does not, then, seem extravagant to conclude, that perplexities concerning the infinite and its relations to the finite, are no real contradictions, but only attempts to think out problems that are beyond our data. We are trying to stretch our terms till they reach to heights and depths for which they are much too short. So when we are asked the question with which we started this discussion, "What is the sum-total of all the possibles?" we venture to maintain that the questioner has no right to press that inquiry upon us, till he has satisfied us that he has a determinate meaning to his words. Of course we must abide by the law of excluded middle: and *if* the subject of the sentence has a real meaning, and *if* in the case under discussion non-finite is the same as infinite, then to the assertion, "The entire number of possibles is either finite or infinite," we must yield our assent. But we claim at present to take refuge in the conditionality of the conditional particles, the two *ifs*: and we wait till these can be replaced by the purely categorical statement, "The entire number of possibles is either finite or infinite." We take refuge in Mill's difficulty against the law of excluded middle, with this difference: he supposes

his difficulty to be valid against the law itself, while we hold it to be valid only against an uncertain application of the law. His proposition is, that when a predicate is declared either to belong or not to belong, to a certain subject, the assertion is open to the exception, that possibly the term standing as subject is devoid of real significance. This may be the defect of the phrase, "All the possibilities."

It is the more needful to insist on the precise position which we take up, for it borders so near on the Hegelian territory, that it may easily be mistaken for one of its belongings. Hegel,<sup>22</sup> for example, teaches us that "in the narrower sense dogmatism consists in the tenacity which draws a hard and fast line between certain terms supposed to be absolute, and others contrary to these. We may see this clearly in the strict 'either—or,' for instance, the world is either finite or infinite; but one of these two it must be. The contrary of this rigidity is the characteristic of all speculative truth. There no such inadequate formulæ are allowed, nor can they possibly exhaust it. These formulæ speculative truth holds in union as a totality, whereas dogmatism invests them in their isolation with a title to truth and fixity." Our way of dealing with the limitations of our understanding is quite different from the Hegelian. Instead of postulating a power

<sup>22</sup> Mr. Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 56. Hegel pities Kant's scrupulosity in limiting contradiction to reason and not referring them to objects; he says the antinomies are real and are found in all things.

higher than understanding, we simply do our best to make allowances for its limitations, so that the partial truths we reach are considered by us, not only as true, but also as partial, or as true only under the recognition that they are partial. Where we recognize a distinct contradiction between propositions, no matter how narrow, we refuse to believe that this real contradiction can be overcome by a so-called reason. Hence we cannot accept what follows on the passage just cited: "The soul is neither finite only, nor infinite only: it is really the one just as much as the other, and in that way neither one nor the other." If finite and infinite are here<sup>o</sup> referred to the same aspect, and if the subject of the proposition, "soul," *can* be taken, as "the sum-total of possibilities" *cannot* be taken, with a perfectly clear and valid meaning; then on the principle of excluded middle, the soul certainly is either infinite or not infinite, "infinite" here meaning inferentially finite, for it cannot be indefinite. The only reason why we cannot apply the like dichotomy to "the sum of the possibles," is because we cannot make sure about the meaning of the phrase. Given that "the sum of the possibles" has a clear signification and validity, then as we have said before, and now repeat for the sake of emphasis, we should have to meet the difficulty from the law of the excluded middle. Some, therefore, would allow the infinity: others would say that non-infinite is not obviously the same as finite, but may be the indefinite. We ourselves have not allowed the question to go as far as this stage: we

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have stopped the inquiry at its very birth by a demand for a perfectly intelligible interpretation of the words, "the sum of the possibles." On the ground above marked out we find a battlefield large enough for the quarrels which probably philosophers will not settle till the end of time, after which something higher than philosophy will enlighten those who, during life, have been consistently something higher than philosophers. Meantime we wait in humble acknowledgment of our limitations.

# GENERAL METAPHYSICS.

## BOOK II.

### EXPLANATION OF SOME NOTIONS NEXT IN POINT OF GENERALITY TO TRANSCENDENTAL BEING.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENT.

###### *Synopsis.*

- (A) Introductory remarks.
- (B) Substance and Accident explained.
  - (1) Definitions of Substance which lead to Pantheism.
  - (2) Destruction of the right notion of substance among English Empiricists.
  - (3) The reality of substance defended. (a) A contrast between substance and accident is matter of clear experience. (b) Substance is defined as what exists *per se*, and is not inherent in a subject. (c) This is the fundamental idea of substance; substance need not be a hidden *substratum* really distinct from accidents that manifest themselves. (d) It follows that substance is a reality known beyond all doubt.
- (4) Accident.

###### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(A) THE second part of this work has an aim like that of the first, so far as it takes up some of those perpetually recurrent notions upon which certain writers have managed to throw very dark

shadows. Bringing these forward to the open daylight, it tries to show plain men that they can understand them and be sure of their real validity. The opponents whom we shall seek to encounter will be mainly our English Empiricists, because they represent the most natural aberrations of British intellect; whereas other aberrations are of an imported character, being borrowed especially from Hegel. Lest, however, we be accused of hiding away that luminary from the sight of our readers, we will give a summary statement of his doctrine about the ideas with which we are going mainly to deal; and should this summary seem inviting to readers, they will be set on the task of investigating for themselves, with what results we will leave them to find out for themselves. Mr. Wallace shall furnish the synopsis:<sup>1</sup> "If the first branch of *Logic* was the sphere of simple Being in a point or series of points, the second is that of difference and discordant Being, broken up in itself. The progress in this second sphere—of *Essentiæ* or Relative Being—consists in gradually overcoming the antithesis and discrepancy between the two sides of it—the *Permanent* and the *Phenomenal*." Here precisely are the notions with which we, in our own way, are going to deal, while Hegel follows his way thus: "At first the stress rests upon the *Permanent* and true Being, which lies behind the seeming, upon the *Essence* or *Substratum* in the background, which lies behind the seeming, on which the show of immediate Being

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, p. cxxi.

has been proved, by the process in the first sphere, really to rest. Then, secondly, *Existence* comes to the front and *Appearances* or *Phenomena* are regarded as the only realities with which science can deal. And yet even in this case we cannot but distinguish between the *phenomena* and their *laws*, between *force* and its *exercise*; and thus repeat the relativity, though both terms of it are now transferred into the range of the *Phenomenal* world. The third range of essential Being is known as *Actuality*, where the two elements in relation rise to the level of independent existences, essences in phenomenal guise, bound together, and deriving their very characteristics from that close union. Relativity is now apparent in actual form, and comprises the three heads of *Substantial Relation*, *Causal Relation*, and *Reciprocal Relation*." *Substance*, *Cause*, *Relation*, and others are the notions we now want to investigate; but we shall not use the Hegelian method, though the fact of its existence we cannot now be accused of having failed duly to advertise. We can claim no more than to have advertised it, for to make its meaning plain is more than we profess to be able to accomplish. At least the reader will recognize the notions which Hegel wants to interpret to him to be those which we also discuss in the following chapters; and furthermore, he will have a specimen page, to show him what very tough material Hegel offers for the philosopher's mastication. In detail we shall seldom recur to Hegel; for our best way of refuting him is to make the clearest and most convincing exposition we can of



our own positive doctrine; to which work without further preface we proceed.

The course we have yet to travel over is not quite settled either by the nature of things or by common agreement; but under the guidance of "sweet reasonableness," after having brought Ontology in its stricter sense, as the doctrine of Being, to its close, we must survey those other grounds which General Metaphysics may fairly claim to occupy. Next to Being the scholastics generally place in the treatise a selection from the highest genera, such as they are declared to be by the Aristotelian categories; for these come nearest in their generality to the "transcendental" term which is confined within no one genus however high. The categories are Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Where? When? Posture, Action, Passion, Habit. Of these Substance and Action will claim the lion's share of our attention; Cosmology deals with nearly all the others as well as with the two just mentioned; but we shall merely add to the latter a few notions as to Time and Space. At once it will be perceived that the second part is divided from the first by no very hard and fast line; for in the former, after we had considered Being in its rigorously transcendental characters, we went on further to consider it in its determinations as actual and possible, necessary and contingent, infinite and finite. The chief difference now is, that we are going to borrow the determinations from some of the Aristotelian categories, and consider Being as substantial and accidental, as active in opposition

to passive, as relative in opposition to absolute, as spacial and as temporal. So that if any one wants a more accurate partition of our work, he may have it under three headings—Being as quite undetermined or transcendental, Being as determined by highly general characters not contained in the Aristotelian categories, and Being as determined by highly general characters contained within those categories.

If we may make here one remark as to a matter of precise terminology, the schoolmen do not usually rank God under the categories; yet they apply *analogously* to Him the terms Substance, Relation, Action. With this understanding we shall make some provision for the application of Substance and Action to God.

(B) (1) The whole of Being is divisible into Substance and Accident; but how these differ it will take us some time to settle, for we shall have much to do in the way of refutation before we come to our own positive doctrine. To begin with, we may make short work of certain definitions which tend to limit, or do actually limit, substance to a single instance, and so favour pantheism. Thus Descartes lays it down<sup>2</sup> that “substance is a thing which exists of itself, in such sort that it needs for its existence no other thing; and, indeed, the substance needing absolutely nothing else can be but one, namely, God.” Though the author does not himself teach that God is the only substance, but

<sup>2</sup> *Princip. Philosoph.* Pt. I. n. 51. Compare Reid's definition, *Works*, Vol. I. p. 232.

rather that God is the only perfect substance, yet he leads the way to the pure pantheism of Spinoza,<sup>3</sup> who writes, "By substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived by itself; in other words, that the concept of which does not need the concept of anything else to aid its formation." That there may be no mistake about his meaning, he plainly declares that no substance can produce another, and that only one substance can exist, of which all other things are either attributes or modes. We should allow to these definitions the element of truth that the completely independent substance is only one; that God is a substance with a perfection wherewith no created thing is a substance; still as we cannot tolerate that finite objects should be regarded as real parts of God, either His attributes or His modes, we dislike the definition of Descartes, while that of Spinoza we wholly repudiate.

(2) The next error about substance will cost us much more labour in its discussion, for we shall have to enter somewhat minutely into the history of opinions. Some may shrink from such minutiae, but perhaps they will have the courage to overcome their repugnance if they are reminded of the importance of the issue. There is a traditional English philosophy which has much vogue in our country to-day; its boast is that it has brought the scholastic notion of substance into utter contempt—in fact has put it out of all reasonable consideration.

<sup>3</sup> *Ethic*, Pt. I. definit. 3. Cousin also allows only one real substance, or one Being, which he defines as that "which in order to its existence supposes nothing outside itself."

This verdict is widely accepted by numbers who have no notion of the real meaning of the controversy. Hence it is worth while to trace at some length the course of this revolution in thought; and no apology for repeated quotations will be wanted by those who understand that if they are to judge a weighty and intricate case, they must have the patience to hear the witnesses. After the evidence shall come a clear verdict; but it is unwise to precipitate the decision. Moreover, the accused shall speak for themselves, and not through reporters, who often report inaccurately. Locke leads the way in the departure from sound doctrine, but as in the case of essence,<sup>4</sup> so too in the present case, he builds up again with one hand what he had pulled down with the other: he is only a half-hearted destroyer. There are indeed sentences in the 23rd chapter of his second book which seem to prove him a thorough-going iconoclast; for instance this: "Not imagining how simple ideas can subsist by themselves, we accustom ourselves to suppose some *substratum* wherein they do subsist, and from which they do result; which therefore we call substance. So that if any one will examine himself, *concerning his pure notion of substance in general*,<sup>5</sup> he will find that he has no other idea of it at all, but only a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities as are capable of producing simple ideas in us, which qualities are commonly

<sup>4</sup> See Pt. I. c. ii.

<sup>5</sup> It is over the nature of the reality to be found in universal ideas that Locke is perpetually tripping. It was so over essence.

called accidents. The idea of substance being nothing but the supposed, but unknown support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist *sine re substante*, without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*." There are two radical errors here: first, the usual blunder of Locke, that because all actual things are singular, general names do not stand for realities, but are "fictions of the mind;" and, second, the error of fancying that the primary notion of substance is some hidden-away support, really distinct from the accidents which it holds together. As we shall see later, the radical notion of substance is preserved, even though it should prove true that it is substance itself which immediately acts on our senses, manifesting its own qualities as modes of its own activity. Locke himself, whose errors are often rather those of confusion than of complete misrepresentation, gives, in his reply to Stillingfleet, the most ample assurances that in spite of appearances he still believes in the reality of substance.<sup>6</sup> "It is laid to my charge that I took the being of substance to be doubtful, or rendered it so by the imperfect or ill-grounded idea I have of it. To which I beg leave to say that I ground not the *being*, but the *idea* of substance on our accustoming ourselves to suppose some *substratum*: for it is of the *idea* alone that I speak there, and not of the

<sup>6</sup> See note to Bk. II. c. xxiii. In c. i. he says, "We know certainly by experience that we sometimes think, and thence draw the infallible consequence that there is something in us which has the power to think," *i.e.*, "a substance."

*being* of substance. And having everywhere affirmed and built upon it, that a man is a substance, I cannot be supposed to question or doubt of the being of substance. Further, I say, 'Sensation convinces us that there are solid, extended substances, and reflexion that there are thinking ones.' So that I think the being of substance is not shaken by what I have said; and if the idea<sup>7</sup> of it should be yet (the being of things not depending on our ideas) the being of substance would not be shaken by my saying we had but an obscure, imperfect idea of it, and that that idea came from our accustoming ourselves to suppose some *substratum*; or, indeed, if I should say that we had no idea of substance at all. For a great many things may be, and are granted to have a being, of which we have no ideas. The being then of substance being safe, let us see whether the idea of it be not so too. I have said that it is grounded upon this, 'That we cannot conceive how simple ideas of sensible qualities subsist alone, and therefore we suppose them to exist in, and be supported by, some common subject, which subject we denote by the name substance.' Which I think is a true reason, because it is the same your lordship grounds the supposition of a *substratum* on in this very page; even on the repugnancy to our conceptions that modes and accidents should subsist by themselves."

<sup>7</sup> Locke should have observed that unless his *idea* of substance was of substance as a reality, *i.e.*, a real idea of substance, he could have no right to affirm that the *being* of substance was real. His idea must tell him that, or else he must remain in ignorance.

Thus Locke takes up the not very clear position, that whether or not he has any real idea of it, there is such a thing as substance; and, moreover, that he has a real idea of it, because of his "custom to suppose a *substratum*, not imagining how simple ideas can subsist by themselves:" indeed on no account will he be thought "almost to discard substance out of the reasonable part of the world." What he really wants to teach us is, that we understand no more of the admitted reality, substance, than that it is a something—we know not what—which is always needful to account for the groups of phenomena brought under our experience; that beyond this generic conception of substance we cannot advance; that being known as a *substratum*, but otherwise unknown, it may be called "the unknown substratum," which is "fiction of the mind" simply because it is "a general idea."

A last quotation we will give as strongly illustrative of Locke's position, not only as to substance, but as to essence also—two subjects which authors generally treat in a kindred spirit.<sup>8</sup> "Had we such ideas of substances as to know what real constitutions produce those sensible qualities we find in them, and how those qualities flow from thence, we could, by the specific ideas of the real essences in our minds, more certainly find out their properties, and discover what qualities they had or had not, than we can now by our senses; and to know the properties of gold it would be no more necessary that gold should exist and that

<sup>8</sup> Bk. IV. c. vi. § 11.

we should make experiments upon it, than it is necessary for the knowing the properties of a triangle, that a triangle should exist in any matter. But we are so far from being admitted into the secrets of nature, that we can scarce so much as ever approach the first entrance towards them. For we are wont to consider the substances we meet with, each of them as an entire thing by itself, having all its qualities in itself, and independent of other things; overlooking for the most part the operations of those invisible fluids they are accompanied with, and upon whose motions and operations depend the greatest part of these qualities which are taken notice of in them, and are made by us the inherent marks of distinction whereby we know and determine them. Put a piece of gold anywhere by itself, separate from the influence and reach of all other bodies, it will immediately lose all its colour and weight, and perhaps malleableness too; which, for aught I know, would be changed into a perfect friability. Water, in which to us fluidity is the essential quality, left to itself would cease to be fluid. But if inanimate bodies owe so much of their present state to other bodies without them, that they would not be what they appear to us, were these bodies that environ them removed, it is yet more so in vegetables . . . and animals. . . . We are then quite out of the way when we think that things contain within themselves the qualities that appear to us in them; and we in vain search for that constitution within the body of a fly or an



elephant, upon which depend those qualities and powers we observe in them."

Enough now has been done to give a view of Locke's position; and our next labour must be to find out how Hume took up some of Locke's sceptical hints, and carried them further than his predecessor ever dreamt of going with them. Hume reduces man<sup>9</sup> to a series of "perceptions," which are divisible into "impressions" and "ideas," the impressions being further subdivisible into "sensations" and "emotions" or "passions." The emotions are termed "reflexions."<sup>10</sup> The test of an "impression" is its liveliness as compared with an "idea," which is its "faint copy," and the test of the reality of an "idea" is the possibility of tracing it back to some "impression" as its source. All that can be said of this source itself is, that "sensations arise originally in the soul *from some unknown causes*:" they are in our regard ultimates. Moreover, impressions and ideas cannot be said to have any *substance* to hold them together: we are in a position to assert only the bond of phenomenal association.<sup>11</sup> "Were ideas entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone would join them; and 'tis impossible the same simple ideas should fall regularly into complex ones (as they commonly do)

<sup>9</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. I. sect. i. "Those *perceptions* which enter with most force and violence we name *impressions*; by *ideas* we mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning."

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* sect. ii. Compare *Inquiry*, sects. ii. and iii. Hence Mr. Spencer borrows his "vivid" and "faint aggregate" as to the two ultimate divisions in Philosophy.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* sect. iv.

*without some bond of union among them, some associating quality by which one idea naturally introduces another.* This uniting principle among ideas is not to be considered as an inseparable connexion; for that has been already excluded from the imagination; nor yet are we to conclude that without it the mind cannot join two ideas; for nothing is more free than that faculty; but we are only to regard it as a gentle force which commonly prevails. The qualities from which this association arises, and by which the mind is conveyed from one idea to another, are three, namely, Resemblance, Contiguity in time and place, and Cause and Effect." Thus the perceptions themselves are made all in all: they are the acts of no substantial soul; they come and go by their own mutual affinities. Not to real outer substances, but to association of impressions and ideas, is attributed what we know of the arrangements called the order of physical nature: inasmuch as "the senses, in changing their object, are necessitated to change them regularly, and take them as they lie contiguous to each other." Yet Hume does not wholly fail to distinguish "a natural world" from "a mental world": for he says, whatever may be the consistent meaning of his words,<sup>12</sup> that "there is a kind of attraction which in the *mental world* will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the *natural*, and to show itself in as many and in as various forms." One would think that he had pretty nearly identified the two worlds for all purposes of human know-

<sup>12</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. IV. sect. ii.

ledge. Yet, as though he had been a common realist, he is at pains to assure us of the correspondence between the two, as between two different orders.

We are brought next explicitly to Hume's doctrine on the notion of substance. He tells<sup>18</sup> us to renounce the quest of causes, and to be content with analyzing effects, dividing our "complex ideas" into "Relations, Modes, and Substances." An examination of the last will show us "that we have no idea of substance distinct from the collection of particular qualities. The idea of Substance as well as that of Mode is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination, and 'have a particular name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection.'" Commonly indeed, but by a "fiction," "the particular qualities are referred to an unknown *something* in which they are supposed to inhere."

Thus, whereas Locke had maintained that we could not in reason deny substance, though we knew no more about it than that it was a something in which attributes inhered as in their subject, Hume goes beyond his predecessor and declares that reason demands no such bond. He is content with "perceptions," and their laws of association. He is so little concerned with Locke's great question about perceptions, namely, the question of innate ideas, that he dismisses the whole business with a short reference to his own psychology; it is a mere matter of the difference between vivid and

<sup>18</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. IV. sects. iv. and vi.

faint states of consciousness.<sup>14</sup> "Understanding by *innate* what is original or copied from no precedent perception, we may assert that all our *impressions* are innate, and all our *ideas* not innate." Even admirers of Hume can hardly withhold their confession that this treatment is too off-hand for so serious a controversy. It is shallow, as is much else in the same author. His thoroughly perverted notion of substance is only part of a perverse system. The reason why Hume cares very little for the word "innate" is obvious: for besides his denial of efficient causality, he leaves no mind wherein ideas may be innate: he has only ideas themselves, and of course it is useless to inquire whether these are innate in themselves. On this point Mr. Huxley, who seems to take his author so much more seriously than that author took himself, gives us most apposite quotations:<sup>15</sup> "What we call the mind is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations." "The true idea of the human mind is to consider it as a system of different perceptions, or different existences which are linked together by the relation of cause and effect,<sup>16</sup> which mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other. In this respect I cannot compare the soul more properly to anything than to a republic or common-

<sup>14</sup> *Inquiry*, sect. ii. note at the end of the section; *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. I. sect. i. in fine.

<sup>15</sup> Huxley's *Hume*, Pt. ii. c. ii. pp. 63, seq.

<sup>16</sup> Of course on Hume's theory of causation, which excludes all efficiency or genuine causality, yet uses the terms "produce, destroy, influence, modify."

wealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts." The members of a state are separate substances, living on a substantial part of the globe, and so they can manage to keep up their connexion: but how Hume's unsubstantial perceptions are to hold together in orderly existence without a substantial mind, baffles all conception. The supposition that they do so cohere, offers, as a basis for psychology, a hypothesis on which no solid system can possibly be built.

Hume's very words, and many of them, have purposely been given because of the conviction that, if seriously weighed, they will utterly discredit their author. It is a fact that numbers of people go on swallowing, as a child will swallow poison which is sweetened over with sugar, the reiterated assertion that Hume thoroughly unmasked the fiction of substance, and proved it to be the idlest of scholastic dreams, for which he substituted a thoroughly scientific conception. Whereas the fact is, that his theory stands a very portent of unscientific construction for any one who will examine the case by pulling to pieces the ill-compacted monstrosity. Hume did not believe in his own extravagances. Though he speaks of sensations "as innate," and "rising originally in the soul from unknown causes," yet when forced to retreat from this position, he takes shelter under the ordinary derivation of them, and declares that "an impression first strikes on the senses; of it

there is a copy taken by the mind." What gives the impression is "body," and in the reality of "body" we have got to acquiesce, whatever speculatively may be our doubts. For<sup>17</sup> "a man must assent to the principle concerning the existence of *body*, though he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless esteemed it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask what causes induce us to believe in the existence of *body*: but 'tis vain to ask whether there be *body* or not; that is a point which we must take for granted in all our reasonings." This *Body*, if analyzed, will turn out to be material *Substance*, and with regard to it Hume's instruction to us is: If you believe what I have been pleased to call my philosophy, you won't believe in *body*: but the fact is you can't help believing in *body*, and making it the very basis of your reasoning on corporeal things. Therefore, in practice, yield to the superior force of nature over my philosophy: but all the same respect my philosophy from grounds of high speculation where practical impossibilities may be disregarded.

We have now got a fairly adequate sketch of Hume's vagaries on the question of substance; with the exception that we have not yet quoted his admission that even on the principles of speculative philosophy there are substances, if calling substance no longer a *substratum*, we define it as<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. IV. sect. i.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* sect. v.

“something that can exist by itself.” Because, when the time comes, we shall make this our own primary idea of substance—*id quod per se stat*—the declaration of Hume is important, and to some extent we shall agree with our adversary; though we shall have to disagree with his application of the definition which leads to the result that “every perception is a substance, and every distinct part of a perception is a distinct substance.”

To the point raised here we shall recur later; at present we will only recapitulate the whole of Hume’s most objectionable doctrine in a very few words from Ueberweg:<sup>19</sup> “We have no clear ideas of anything but impressions: a substance is something quite different from an impression: hence we have no knowledge of substance. Inherence (inhesion) in something is regarded as necessary for the existence of our perceptions; but in reality they need no substrate. The questions whether perceptions inhere in a material or in an immaterial substance cannot be answered; neither has it any intelligible meaning.” It is the acceptance of this doctrine by so many of the philosophers in England that is a disgrace to the sound sense of the nation. The theory would not be received if its real nature were better understood; and therefore so many pages have been expended in its statement.

Having traced an error from Locke to Hume, we will add a few words about its recent champions. As one of the chief propagators of Hume’s bad philosophy in our own generation stands Mill. Not quite

<sup>19</sup> *History of Philosophy*, Vol. II. p. 524. (English translation.)

unwaveringly, but characteristically, he is an idealist with regard to matter, and assigns to it no known reality outside the senses.<sup>20</sup> "Matter may be defined as a permanent possibility of sensation. If I am asked whether I believe in matter, I ask whether the questioner accepts this definition of it. If he does, I believe in matter, and so do all Berkeleians; in any other sense I do not." So much for his profession of belief as to matter; mind he reduces similarly to actual and possible states of consciousness, with the important addition, that between these there must be some real, though undescribable bond, a bond not required for the connexion of material objects.<sup>21</sup> "The theory which resolves mind into a series of feelings, with a background of possibilities of feeling, can effectually withstand the most invidious of the arguments directed against it. The remembrance of a sensation, even if it be not referred to any particular state, involves the suggestion and belief that a sensation, of which it is a copy, actually existed in the past; and an expectation involves the belief, more or less positive, that a sensation, or other feeling to which it directly refers, will exist in the future. Nor can the phenomena involved in these two states of consciousness be adequately expressed, without saying that the belief they include is, that I myself formerly had, or that I myself shall hereafter have, the sensations remembered or expected. If, therefore, we speak of the mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of

<sup>20</sup> *Examination*, c. xi. p. 198. (2nd Edit.)    <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* c. xii. pp. 211, 212.



feelings aware of itself as past and present, and we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or *Ego*, is something different from the series of feelings, or possibilities of them, or of accepting the paradox that something, which *ex hypothesi*, is but a series of feelings, can be aware of itself as a series." So deep-seated is Mill's horror of substance that he prefers to take up the paradox, which he calls, "an ultimate inexplicability," such as in last analyses, he says, we must come across because we can explain no further. The same is Mr. Spencer's plea for calling all ultimate scientific ideas "inconceivable," or "unknowable": to "know" is "to comprehend," that is, to rank under some more ultimate idea; but ultimate notions themselves cannot be ranked under more ultimate; they must be accepted with a vague consciousness, but they cannot be known. Mill, therefore, summons up his resolution to make an act of faith "that something which has ceased, or is not yet in existence, can still be *in a manner* present; that a series of feelings, the infinitely greater part of which is past or future, can be gathered up, *as it were*, into a single present conception accompanied by a belief of reality." Truly this is "a paradox" on Mill's principles, and may well require the qualifications "in a manner," and "as it were," or some other saving clause to help it out.

In a later edition<sup>22</sup> Mill was driven to make more explicit acknowledgment of the real bond that is requisite to unite together the several states

<sup>22</sup> Appendix, p. 256.

of consciousness. "The inexplicable tie or law, the organic union which connects the present consciousness with the past one, of which it reminds me, is as near, I think, as we can get to a positive conception of self. That *there is something real in this tie, real as the sensations themselves, and not a mere product of the laws of thought*, without any fact corresponding to it, I hold to be indubitable. Whether we are directly conscious of it in the act of remembrance, as we are of succession in the fact of having successive sensations, or whether, according to the opinion of Kant, we are not conscious of self at all, but are compelled to assume it as a necessary condition of memory, I do not undertake to decide. But this original element which has no community of nature with any of the things answering to our names, and to which we cannot give any name but its own peculiar one without implying some false or ungrounded theory, is the *Ego*, or self. As such I ascribe a reality to the *Ego*—to my own mind—different from that real existence as a permanent possibility, which is the only reality I acknowledge in matter."

It would not be easy to declare exactly what was the view either of Hume or of Mill; for they both labour under a certain degree of inevitable obscurity; but at any rate the tendency of their teaching has been sufficiently indicated, and we shall possess a fairly clear idea what it is that we have to refer when we seek to establish controversially our knowledge of substance. Mill might suffice as the exponent of Humism in the nineteenth

century ; but his great ally, Mr. Bain, may usefully be quoted, because some of his utterances will discover to us still more fully the enemy's position, before we make our onset.<sup>23</sup> " Substance is not the antithesis of all the attributes, but the antithesis of the fundamental, essential, or defining attributes, and such as are variable or inconstant."<sup>24</sup> From the relative character of the word attribute, the fancy grew up that there must be a *substratum*, or something different from attributes, for all attributes to inhere in. Now as anything that can impress the human mind—Extension, Resistance, &c.—may be and is termed an attribute, we seem driven entirely out of reality if we find a something that could not be called an attribute, and might stand as a substance. Substance is not the absence of all attributes, but the most fundamental, persisting, inerasable or essential attribute or attributes in each case. The substance of gold is its high density, colour, lustre—everything that we consider necessary to its being gold. Withdraw these, and gold itself would no longer exist ; substance and everything else would disappear." Mr. Bain is not wholly wrong in some of these assertions ; for it is true that, in the wide sense of attribute, we can put almost anything into the shape of an attribute,<sup>25</sup> saying even that it is the attribute of a certain

<sup>23</sup> *Logic*, Vol. I. Appendix C. n. vii. p. 262.

<sup>24</sup> Mill says the same thing, *Examination*, c. xiii. p. 219.

<sup>25</sup> Spinoza's definition is calculated to identify attribute with substance. " Per attributum intelligo id quod intellectus de substantia percipit, tanquam ejusdem essentiam constituens." (*Ethic.* definit 4.) He thus distinguishes an *attribute* from a *modè*.

object to be a substance; for we can predicate of it that it is a *substance*. But while we can go with him a certain way, he makes it clear to us that we cannot go with him the whole length of his doctrine. For after telling us that the substance of matter is inertia or resistance, he declares that the substance of mind is feeling, will, and thought; and that "the supposition of an *Ego*, or self, for the powers to inhere in, is a pure fiction, coined from non-entity by the illusion of supposing, that because attribute applies to something, there must be something which cannot be described as an attribute." Finally, in *Mind* Mr. Bain has declared that to him "the word substance has no meaning." He cannot therefore allow that behind phenomena "there is anything to scrutinize;" and he is confident that "certainly in respect to matter we seem to know all that is to be known, as far as regards ultimate properties," and that "if there be anything beneath all this which a grudging power hides from us, we need say nothing about it: to us the curtain is the picture." So we are to give up hankering after a revelation of "an unknown and unknowable *substratum*," because this is "an idea we cannot possibly obtain by experience."<sup>26</sup>

Our English philosophers in their denial of substance have a following in France, where M. Taine<sup>27</sup> declares his opinion that "there is neither spirit nor matter, but only groups of movements actual and possible, and groups of thoughts actual and possible;

<sup>26</sup> *Logic*, Vol. I. Introduction, n. 16.

<sup>27</sup> *Le Positivisme Anglais*, p. 114.

there are no substances, but only systems of facts, . . . substance and force being relics of scholastic entities: there exist only facts and their laws, events and their relations." The only legitimate sense which he allows to substance is that "substance is the whole of which the qualities are the constituent parts," or "the different points of view," taken singly and by abstraction from the rest.

The empirical school, in their denial of substance, were opposed by Hamilton and his school; but he rests his cause on his very awkward law of the Conditioned, which is so often dragged in to decide a controversy. By this law we are supposed to be forced to pass beyond the phenomenal to the noumenal.<sup>28</sup> "Take substance. I am aware of a phenomenon—a phenomenon be it of mind or of matter; that is, I am aware of a certain relative, consequently conditioned, existence. This existence is only known, and only knowable, as in relation. Mind and matter exist for us only as they are known for us: and they are known only as they have certain qualities relative to certain faculties of knowledge in us, and we certain faculties of knowledge relative to certain qualities in them. All our knowledge of mind and matter is thus relative, that is, conditioned." But we cannot think mind or matter as only thus conditioned, but "are compelled by a necessity of nature to think that out of this relativity it has an absolute or irrelative existence—*i.e.*, an existence as absolute or irrelative, unknown and incomprehensible; that it is the known phe-

<sup>28</sup> Reid's *Works*, p. 935.

nomenon of an unknown substance." It is very troublesome to have to *believe* an object which we declare *unknown*: and therefore we will try to give an account of substance which shall make it the known object of our conceptions as well as of our belief. We will endeavour to show that it is a notion quite intelligible in itself, to which reality answers on the side of the object, and which is derived from the most ordinary use of our understanding.

(3) The work now before us, which is not a slight one, is gradually to disengage the essential idea of substance, and to show that this idea represents something real.

(a) Roughly it is said that substance is what exists by itself, and does not inhere in another: but this declaration is open to misconstruction until it is more precisely limited. For a spoon inserted into some preserves is a substance, though it inheres in something else. Upon this earth of ours, where nothing seems to stand by itself, but everything is supported by some other objects, we need a more accurate determination of substance than simply to say, it is that which exists of itself without being sustained by another. Not only may substance rest on substance, but the schoolmen speak of substantial forms, which are obviously not accidents, yet which inhere in matter, as, for instance, man's soul in his body; and they speak also of substantial forms still more dependent on matter, so that they could not exist alone, as does man's soul after death.

To put before ourselves a clear notion of the

mode of inherence which distinguishes an accident, we had better select a class of real accidents about which there can be no dispute. A man may dispute whether his faculties are really distinct from his soul: but that the acts of these faculties, his thoughts and volitions, are in some real sense distinct from his soul is a truth which St. Thomas says no sane person can dispute.<sup>29</sup> Ideas and wishes come and go: they so depart as to leave habits formed, and memories of themselves afterwards recallable: they are joined to a continuous consciousness in the unity of the *Ego*, or I; the successive states are real, and the mind to which they belong is real, and the contrast between the two gives, on reflexion, the two different notions of substance and accident. It is irrational, after the teaching of Hume, to regard each "perception" or mental phenomenon as a distinct substance, and it is equally irrational to regard it as an activity or state belonging to no substance. Wandering thoughts we may have in one meaning of the phrase, but it is nonsense to talk of thoughts existing apart from a thinking substance, or, as Mill puts it, "a series of states aware of itself as a series." This will appear more clearly when we declare what we mean by substance. The like contrast between substance and accidents is shown indisputably between an organism and its sensations, a projectile and its velocity, a carriage and its motion. No one can intelligibly maintain that sensation, velocity, and motion are realities of no sort, or that they are

<sup>29</sup> *Quæst. Disp. de Spirit. a. xi. ad 1.*

realities not inherent in substance, or that they are realities quite identified with the reality of their substance as such. The examples chosen have all been of the more incontrovertible order: for whether there exist those more than mere modal accidents, as they are sometimes called, that is, quantity and qualities which most theologians suppose to be proved capable of a separate existence by the mystery of the sacramental species in the Holy Eucharist,—this is a question which we may leave to Theology, for it is chiefly thence that the philosophic theory has been derived. But in the case of thoughts, volitions, and motions we have manifest instances of what we mean by real accidents: for these even by Divine power could not exist at all unless they had a *subject of inhesion*. On the other hand, no substance rests upon another as in a *subject of inhesion*: the substance exists *per se*, and the best way to fix in the mind the distinction between the two modes of existence is steadily to contemplate the case of mind with its thoughts and volitions, or of body with its movements at different velocities. “Substance is Being inasmuch as this Being is by itself; accident is that whose Being is to be in something else (*tanquam cujus esse est inesse*).” Such is the definition of St. Thomas formed in accordance with the method of discrimination above explained.<sup>30</sup>

As repetition in these matters is useful, the account already given shall be given again in the

<sup>30</sup> “Substantia est ens tanquam per se habens esse: accidens vero tanquam cujus esse est inesse.” (*De Potentia*, a. vii.)



words of a scholastic writer who is not at all inclined to exceed in his scholasticism. "As soon as we begin," says Tongiorgi,<sup>31</sup> "to reflect upon our experience, whether inner or outer, we obtain the notion of substance and accident, even though the philosophic names be unknown to us. For in truth so many changes, and such constant succession in things, straightway show us that there must be something which is recipient of these—which gains and loses them—which is their subject. For example, the wax which I handle is now warm, now cold; first hard, then soft, and finally liquid; by the pressure of the fingers it acquires first one shape, and afterwards another: yet throughout it is the same piece of wax. There is, therefore, a subject permanent under the successive changes: it is one while they are many; it can be without any particular set of them, they cannot be without it, for they are precisely its modifications. Similarly as regards the experience of our inner consciousness: amid the multitude, variety, and succession of the ways in which we are consciously affected, we perceive something which is one, the same, and constant, namely, that which is the subject of the different states, and which experiences them as its own. Thus experience, outer as well as inner, furnishes us the idea of something which is *per se* and of something which is *in altero*; the former is *substance*, the latter *accident*. And between these two conditions of Being there is no medium: there is no Being which does not belong to the one or the

<sup>31</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. II. c. i. art. i.

other category." Hence substance is said to be *id quod est*, while accident is said to be *id quo est*: substance is that which is: accident is that whereby substance is modified. Of the two orders of experience, internal and external, the former is the most telling: the merest rustic is convinced that he has some permanent self, which undergoes the real vicissitudes of joy and sadness, of love and hatred, of heat and cold, of hunger and satisfied appetite. The unity is necessary for the comparison, and the variety of conscious affections is necessary to furnish the materials of comparison.

When, therefore, it is said that analysis or reflexion is necessary to draw out from experience the distinction between substance and accident, it need not be strictly a philosophic process: common sense is adequate to the task, though philosophy may do it more perfectly. Reid<sup>32</sup> introduces an unnecessary mystery into the grounds for the judgment that qualities imply a subject; whereas it is an obvious interpretation of facts, when we assert substances and accidents, and declare the latter to depend for their existence upon the former, or to be inherent in their respective subjects. We maintain the distinction to be given by a most rational analysis of experience, within the competence of any fairly educated man: whereas Reid attributes it to unaccountable "suggestion," or to "an inference" which we cannot logically defend. "If any man should demand proof that sensation cannot be with-

<sup>32</sup> *Intellectual Powers*, Essay ii. c. xix. See too his complaint about the relativity of our knowledge of body. (*Active Powers*, Essay i. c. i.)

out a mind or sentient Being, I confess that I can give none ; and that to pretend to prove it seems to me almost as absurd as to deny it.”<sup>33</sup> Then he falls back as usual on the mysterious process of nature which no man can account for :<sup>34</sup> “ Leaving Hume’s philosophy to those who have occasion for it, and can use it discreetly as a chamber exercise, we may still inquire how the rest of mankind, and even the adepts themselves, except in some solitary moments, have got so strong and irresistible a belief, that thought must have a subject, and be the act of some thinking Being : how every man believes himself to be something distinct from his ideas and impressions—something which continues the same identical self when all his ideas and impressions are changed. It is impossible to trace the origin of this opinion in history, for all languages have it interwoven in their original construction. All nations have always believed it. The constitution of all laws and governments, as well as all common transactions of life, suppose it. It is no less impossible for any man to recollect when he himself came by this notion ; for, as far back as we can remember, we were already in possession of it, and as fully persuaded of our own existence, and the existence of other things, as that one and one make two. It seems, therefore, that this opinion preceded all reason, and experience, and instruction : and this is the more probable because we could not get it by any of these means. . . . By what rules of logic we

<sup>33</sup> Reid’s *Works*, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> *Idem.* p. 110. See too what is said of “ suggestion,” pp. 111, 122.

make the inference it is impossible to show; nay, it is impossible to show how our sensations and thoughts can give us the very notion either of a mind or of a faculty." Reid's mystery is merely the mystery, how there can be such a thing as reason at all; but if we take the fact on the abundantly sufficient evidence which comes before the consciously active reason that is within us, all will go well. We must reach an end of explanations somewhere, and if that before which we are brought to a standstill is self-evident truth, there is no room for decent complaint; it is not as though we stopped short at Mr. Spencer's "inconceivable ultimates." The analysis by the reflecting mind of its own experience into acts or phenomena which are transient, and into subjects of such acts or phenomena, giving to them their connexion, rests ultimately on intuitively evident data. Therefore it is a rational process with which we ought to rest content. We have already in part described the process: but more remains to be done before we have adequately established the idea of substance.

(b) It is necessary to explain more fully what is meant by existing *per se*, and what by existing *in alio*. There is a sense in which God alone exists *per se*, that is, independently of all else; and there is a sense in which every created substance exists *in alio*, for in God "we live, move, and have our being." Not only did God create all finite things, but He is omnipresent to them, and ever conserves them in existence, or else they would be annihilated. "For how could anything endure if Thou wouldst not? or

be preserved if not called by Thee? ”<sup>35</sup> By agreement, then, the schoolmen have settled that they will not mean by *per se* the self-existence which is proper to God alone. To mark the distinction, St. Thomas even rejects, with an explanation, the definition of substance, which under another explanation might be accepted. “The definition of substance,” he writes,<sup>36</sup> “is not Being *per se* without a subject” (*ens per se sine subjecto*). At first sight the words appear to deny what we want to prove, namely, that to be *per se* is just what we ought to mean by substance. But the divergence simply turns on a double use of Being, either for *existence* or for the *thing* or *quiddity* which may exist: St. Thomas is speaking of the former, we are keeping our original engagement to abide by the latter. He says that *absolutely* to exist *per se* is peculiar to the Divine substance; but that *hypothetically*, if a created substance exist, it will exist *per se* (*quidditati seu essentiae substantiae competit habere esse non in subjecto*). On a like supposition St. Thomas, in another place,<sup>37</sup> defines substance as “a thing to the nature of which it is due that it should not exist in a subject” (*res cujus naturæ debetur non esse in alio*). The schoolmen, in order to leave *per se* applicable to both uncreated and created substance, have chosen *a se* to signify the special character of the former. When they affirm that some created things must exist *per se*, they do not deny that these things are from God, but they assert that the created world is not a mere

<sup>35</sup> Wisdom xi. 26.<sup>36</sup> Sum. iii. q. lxxvii. a. i. ad 2.<sup>37</sup> Quodlibet, ix. a. v. ad 2.

series of accidents, one inherent within another, and the whole either left without any subject or assignable to God as a subject. Such a series, whether it is regarded as finite or infinite, and such an inherence of all creatures in God as their substance, both involve impossibilities. Therefore our conclusion is that there are created substances, which in their own order are ultimate subjects, and do not inhere in other subjects: so far they exist *per se*. They are the *entia*, while their accidents stand in regard to them as *entia entium*. The doctrine is as old as Aristotle, who teaches that substance is "primarily and simply Being" (τὸ πρῶτως ὄν, καὶ ἀπλῶς ὄν),<sup>38</sup> while accidents are "not simply Being" (οὐδ' ὄντα, ὡς ἀπλῶς εἶπεῖν).<sup>39</sup> St. Thomas repeats the same doctrine. Even Hume, in a passage already quoted, says that he admits the reality of substances in the sense of things that exist by themselves: his error is to declare "perceptions" to be substances of this kind. Accordingly we are safe in our definition and in our understanding of it: substance is that which exists *per se*, or which has its own proper Being (*id cui ratione sui convenit esse, cui competit esse non in alio*); and thus it is opposed to accident, which exists *in alio*, or which at least naturally, whatever may happen preternaturally, has its Being only by inherence in a subject.

(c) It will give us the key to a host of difficulties if we hold firmly to this as the most radical definition of substance. According to it we see that

<sup>38</sup> *Metaphys.* Lib. VII. c. i.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Lib. XII. c. i.

God is a substance, though He has no accidents, and does not present within Himself the double fact of a permanent essence, modified by perpetual changes of state. Etymologically indeed *substance* suggests *substare accidentibus*, "to underlie accidents:" but many a word, when applied to God, has to give up its etymological meaning, which even as applied to creatures often presents a superficial aspect rather than an essential nature. Now the chief attack on substance is made precisely on this misconception, that the inmost essence of the notion is a *substratum*, hidden away under qualities really distinct from itself, a fixed, unchangeable thing clothed in attributes, some variable, some constant, but all, as was just said, really distinct. Such is the interpretation of the scholastic theory by most opponents: while the schoolmen themselves have held up existence *per se* as the fundamental notion of substance. For, first, it is clear that they could apply no other definition to God, whom they never regarded as a compound Being, with attributes that were "accidental." Moreover, even with regard to created substance, they were aware of the enormous philosophic difficulty in the proof of what are sometimes called "absolute accidents that are more than merely modal," for the demonstration of which they relied not on mere arguments from reason, but upon consequences which they thought to be involved in the Church's doctrine about the Holy Eucharist. Notwithstanding which dogma, they had among their numbers those who taught that the substance of the soul was the

immediate agent in thought and volition, and did not act through the medium of really distinct faculties. In support of this historic assertion about the schoolmen, take the words of an author writing in the thirteenth century, Henry of Ghent:<sup>40</sup> "The substance of the soul, which is really one thing, nevertheless according to its different determinations is said to have different faculties of intellect and sense: but radically its faculties are nothing but its simple substance, the diversity of powers adding nothing over and above its essence, except a reference to the diversity of its activities according as their objects vary." Duns Scotus was another who taught that the substance of the soul was the immediate agent in its activities, without the interposition of really distinct faculties; and he, being the head of a school, had many followers. These words are his:<sup>41</sup> "The substance of the soul is really identical with its faculties; so that while in relation to body the soul is its substantial form, it takes the name of different faculties according to its different operations. Thus the soul is the eliciting principle and the recipient of its own acts, as appears in the act of intelligence: by its own substance it is at once the efficient cause and the subject, not by any faculty which is really distinct." What is here taught in regard to the soul was taught also in regard to material agencies: and Suarez, if not an

<sup>40</sup> See the account of Henry of Ghent in Stöckl's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Band II. § 204.

<sup>41</sup> *Ib.* § 225. See also a list of authors quoted by Hamilton, *Metaphys.* Lect. xx. pp. 5, 6.



advocate of the opinion, is at least a witness as to its probability on mere philosophic grounds.<sup>42</sup> He says:

"St. Thomas, with a sufficient amount of proof (*satis probabiliter*) establishes, that in every created nature the immediate principle of action is distinct from the substance, and is, therefore, an accident. To assign a reason for this *a priori* is difficult, though St. Thomas gives several probable arguments, which Scotus and others impugn, while Capreolus and Cajetan offer a vigorous and wide-ranging defence. But I think the efforts of these two latter writers unavailing, because in truth their reasons are not conclusive, nor ought a wise philosopher, in a question so recondite, to look for demonstration.<sup>43</sup> For unless it can be shown to be above the degree of perfection possible to a created substance to be the immediate and single principle of an act which is in the order of accidents, we can assign no *a priori* reason why our present created agencies should always stand in need of an accidental principle whereby to act. That a creature should act proximately and solely by its own substance does not seem to require an infinite perfection in the order of substances; and only infinite perfection seems to be incommunicable to creatures."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Metaphys.* Disp. xviii. sect. iii.

<sup>43</sup> Lepidi says: "In this question it seems that nothing can be said for certain." (*Ontologia*, Lib. III. c. vi. n. vii.)

<sup>44</sup> Of the various views on this point St. Bonaventure says: "Quælibet opinio suos habet defensores: nec est facile rationibus cogentibus earum aliquam improbare." (In Lib. II. Distinc. xxiv. p. i. a. ii. q. i.)

The purport of these quotations must not be misconceived: we have not got to settle the question of the real difference between substance and the most absolute of the "absolute" accidents, but we have got to refute a common error. That error is that the scholastic notion of substance stands or falls with the truth of the supposed *substratum*, upon which are engrafted qualities or activities really distinct from it, and manifesting themselves to us as the only objects of our immediate experience. Against this theory we are showing that the essential notion of substance is, not that it is such a *substratum*, but that it is a Being existing *per se*: and that so far as substance is a *substratum*, the one class of accidents which are philosophically demonstrable beyond all controversy are modal accidents, such as thought, volition, and motion. Let us see what is meant in the words of a non-scholastic author: Mr. M'Cosh's opinion suffices for substance and for the *substratum* so far as the authors above quoted undertake fully to prove it apart from theological considerations: "I do not stand up," he says, "for an unknown *substratum*, beneath the known thing; whatever is known as existing, as acting, as having permanence, I regard as substance." So much reason can establish, putting it beyond a doubt that each distinct agent is a substance; but for the downright proof that there are accidents of quantity and quality which by Divine power might be made to go on existing and acting when their substance was no more, the schoolmen rested on their interpretation of the real species in

the Blessed Sacrament. This assertion, perhaps, will sound suspicious without witnesses, but witnesses we have in abundance. Among recent authors Dr. Dupont testifies that not philosophy, but theology, gave rise to the question of accidents which are more than merely modal.<sup>45</sup> Father Mendive<sup>46</sup> puts down the proposition not as indisputably true, but as more probable, and his chief arguments are from the Holy Eucharist and from the condition of grace as an accident in the soul; and Lepidi<sup>47</sup> declares that we owe our knowledge on the matter, not simply to the light of reason, but to an inference from revealed doctrine. Nor are these declarations unsupported by what we actually find in the writings of the old schoolmen, as will appear if we return to the passage in Suarez, which we were lately considering. Having said that the arguments of St. Thomas to prove *a priori* the real distinction of the active powers of a created object from its substance are not demonstrative, he adds that the *a posteriori* or inductive arguments are better and lead *probabiliter satis* to a conclusion; but that the convincing proof is borrowed from the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. We are, then, amply warranted in our assertion that among the schoolmen, the essential idea of substance is independent of the controversy about a really distinct *substratum*; and that, therefore, the brunt of the enemy's attack on the notion is directed against a mere outwork, the capture of which would leave

<sup>45</sup> *Ontologie*, Thèse 48, p. 174.    <sup>46</sup> *Ontologia*, pp. 145—151.

<sup>47</sup> *Ontologia*, pp. 184, 185.

the citadel safe as ever. He who is vaunted as the great victor over the old idea substance, Hume, is its champion in so far as he says that he believes in the existence of substance as in that which exists by itself.

Whether what exists by itself will be *permanent* or not is a distinct question: it is possible for a created substance to be annihilated, though we are not aware of a complete instance in point: but at any rate, *permanence* is not of the essence of substance, any more than the non-permanence or succession of accidents is of their essence: Kant, therefore, and Green, are wrong in the leading position which they assign to permanence.<sup>48</sup> A substance would have been a substance, though its duration had been but for a moment.

(d) After having laboriously extracted from conflicting views the essential signification of the word, we can, if we hold by the true principles of human knowledge, assert that substance is a reality known to us beyond the shadow of a doubt. We may resolutely refuse the fetters offered to us by Mr. Huxley, when he propounds the doctrine that, "whether mind or matter has a substance or not, we are incompetent to discuss." We certainly know, besides God, a real world which cannot all be made up of mutually inherent accidents: there is in creation, real Being, and the reality of Being implies substance, as Aristotle in the name of sound sense proclaimed: "It is clear that of the various

<sup>48</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, Vol. II. pp. 130, 160. (Max Müller's Translation.)

kinds of Being the fundamental is that which answers to the question, What is it? and this signifies its *essence* or *substance*."<sup>49</sup> He adds that always to inquire what a thing is, means to inquire what its substance is. Substance he properly looks upon as a real thing, not as a grammatical term meaning the same as subject in regard to predicate, or substantive in regard to adjective. He does indeed remark, of course without reference to mysteries like the Trinity and the Incarnation, that what he calls the "first substance" as distinguished from the "second substance," or a substance in the concrete and singular as distinguished from substance in the abstract and universal, cannot be the predicate of anything else. "Socrates," for example, cannot be a predicate except to a synonym; but this observation is not all one with saying that substance means only grammatical subject in a sentence. Moreover, the reality of substance becomes certain to us, not only as regards the conscious self of each one of us, but also as regards other objects, whether personal or impersonal. We reject, therefore, as quite unphilosophical the limitation put by Mansel,<sup>50</sup> that "beyond the range of conscious being we can have only a negative idea of substance," and that "in denying consciousness" we deny "the only form in which

<sup>49</sup> φανερόν ὅτι τούτων πρώτων ὄν, τὸ τί ἐστίν, ὅπερ σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν. (*Metaphys.* Lib. VII. c. i.) Aristotle says, that "second substances," that is, genera and species, "are not in a subject, but are affirmed of a subject," whereas "first substances," that is, individual substances in the concrete, neither are in, nor are affirmed of, a subject." (*Categor.* c. vi.)

<sup>50</sup> *Prolegom. Log.* c. v. pp. 131, 132.

unity and substance have been presented to us," while between unconscious things "some kind of unity may exist, or it may not," but at any rate, we cannot come to the knowledge of it.

In the end, then, we are in this position. The adversary thought to stop our assertion of substance by arguing that it is idle to affirm the existence of a mere mysterious, unknown something, which is distinct from all that manifests itself in experience. We elude the attempt so to baffle us partly by making substance independent of the question about a distinct *substratum*, and partly by showing that at least there are real accidents of the merely modal order which are distinct from their subject. With the exception that he says more of Locke than is unqualifiedly true, Rosmini gives a fair compendium of our doctrine:<sup>51</sup> "In my opinion, substance was denied by Locke through a pure misconception, he imagining that more is required than is really the case. In fact, to have the idea of substance it is enough to know that there can be no modification without a subject modified. Now the idea of this subject is the idea of substance. But you may tell me, you do not know what the subject is: nay, further, that you cannot know it, for to you it is essentially an  $x$ . Still you know that it is the subject of such and such modifications, the cause of such and such effects, and what do you want more? It is true that if you strip this subject of its modifications, of its properties, of its effects, you have only

<sup>51</sup> *The Origin of Ideas*, Vol. I. sect. iii. c. ii. a. i. p. 37, in a footnote. (English Translation.)

the  $x$  remaining; but even then you will still have the idea of it, you know the relation which this  $x$  has with its perceived modifications. Such is the knowledge we have of substance considered in the abstract; nor have we a right to require more, since there is enough in that knowledge to give us the idea in question."

The mention in this extract of "stripping the subject of its modifications" introduces a point yet to be explained as regards the reality of substance: for it is precisely the taunt which the school of Hume makes against us, that we know nothing but the modifications, and that if we take them away there is a blank left: if we remove all the attributes of a thing, then nothing is left. We must distinguish between attributes and attributes, and between removal and removal. Attributes strictly so called are the accidental modes of a substance, attributes in the wider sense include the substantial characters themselves, as when we say it is man's attribute to have a rational soul, or a nature compounded of body and soul, and when we say that it is God's attribute to be an infinite, self-existent Being. Now it would surely be a mere sophism to play upon the uncertain use of a word, and because attribute in its larger meaning includes substance, to pretend that there is no difference between substance and attribute in its narrower meaning. So much as to the two sorts of attributes: next as to the removal from substance of attributes strictly so called; for only with respect to them has the question any meaning. The removal may be

physical and it may be metaphysical or logical. Logically, or by mere mental abstraction, it is clear that we can remove the attributes and still have the concept of substance remaining. What must be confessed, however, is that this concept may be only very generic, such as substance, without further determination, material substance, living substance, &c. For as we declared in the chapter on Essences, our knowledge of them is often very imperfect and generic: so that we specify them, not by genuine specific differences, but by accidental differences, which suffice to mark off one kind of thing from another, without precisely indicating wherein the difference of kind consists. If, however, we take up the consideration of a physical removal, we find that some accidents can be removed and leave the substance intact, as when a ball loses its velocity, or a coal its heat, or a mind its thought. Created means suffice to bring about these removals; but how much further Divine power could go on stripping off accidents while the substance endured, we must not pretend to determine. Those who are fond of conjectures might conjecture, though they could not prove the parity of the two cases, that as in the Blessed Sacrament God leaves the accidents of bread without their substance, so He might leave the substance without any of its accidents. Some accidents at any rate He does remove in a way impossible to nature: for example, the quantity of Christ's Body is left without its connatural extension in space: the Sacred Body is just where the small,



round Host is, but it does not become correspondingly round and small.

If, however, on matters like these we are powerless to answer the difficulties of objectors, they are equally powerless to make their difficulties effective against anything that we positively hold. They are ignorant, and so are we, in many things; but neither their nor our ignorance is a reason for renouncing the little knowledge that we can attain.

We must not be thought to have conceded more than in fact we have. When we allowed that created faculties of action may, perhaps, be not really distinct from the substance under its dynamic aspect, we were not allowing that substance may, perhaps, be reduced to a continuous series of activities: that would be more like Hume's view, or Lotze's, who says,<sup>52</sup> "Every soul is what it shows itself to be, a unity whose life is in definite ideas, feelings, and efforts." The faculties may be not really distinct from the substance: they may be the substance itself under the aspects of its various activities; but at any rate a substance there is, and in it the faculties are united, and we have not got mere unsubstantial activities by themselves. If by activities some authors mean substance having these activities, then they are on our side.

After all that has been argued it is needless to enter into a special polemic against Kant's theory that substance is not a real object of knowledge, but a category of the understanding according to which we are obliged to think the

<sup>52</sup> *Metaphys.* Bk. III. c. i. § 245.

objects of our experience, without being sure that things in themselves are substances. It is the perversion of all right reason thus to turn our most evident objective conceptions into mere conditions of conceiving, and Kant himself is not always faithful to his extravagant resolution, to call insight into objective truth a mere form in which mind must act by reason of its subjective nature. Here is our great divergence from him: We hold that when we have before the mind the idea "substance," derived in the manner already explained, then to call such an idea a rule of our thinking, and an *a priori* form which, so far as we can ascertain, is without any counterpart in the region of objects, means simply to abdicate the empire of reason. For of nothing are we more convincingly assured than that such ideas are ideas, and therefore must represent to us some object; so that to degrade them to mere subjective rules would be equivalently to renounce all objectivity. The further urging of this point would require the repetition of nearly all that is laid down in *First Principles*; so we forbear to say more.

As we conclude this account of Substance we can hardly fail to remark how vague is the attack of the adversaries on the point, how little they have of definite in their theory of substance except that it is an unknown *substratum*, something other than anything we come across in our experience of things, something which is the antithesis of all that we can predicate of known phenomena, and which therefore it is a contradiction in terms to pretend to know.

Whereas we have seen that the primal notion of substance is Being, which exists *per se*, in contradistinction to such realities as the figure or the velocity of a body, which clearly cannot exist *per se*. Hume, the great leader of revolt against substance, himself admits that we must affirm existences, *per se*, and as such he defines his "perceptions." So that while we teach that there is one substance of mind in each man, with many accidental modes, Hume teaches that there are as many distinct substances as there are "perceptions," the several perceptions being bound together by some indescribable law of association which is not a substance, and not an efficient causality, and not anything to which we can give a name except that of association. The unity of consciousness is impossible on these terms; the creations and the annihilations of substances, which must take place while the perceptions come into being and cease to be, are appalling; and the whole theory is manifestly absurd. Still it is accepted as part of modern wisdom, and like much more of modern wisdom, it is accepted with no very precise intelligence of what it means, or of what is the doctrine for which it is the substitute. In the name of right reason we adhere to the old idea of substance, *ens per se stans*.

The idea thus vindicated will help to solve the difficulty of those who allow that our means of knowledge put us into some phenomenal relation with things outside us, so that we can adapt ourselves to external conditions, but who doubt whether

we have herein any real insight into the things themselves. If substance stands to its phenomenal manifestations in the way which we have partially indicated, then since we cannot know the phenomena without knowing something about outer reality, there are no unreal phenomena, either on the objective side or on the subjective side. Even mental illusions, so far as they are acts of mind, represent some objects, actual or possible. The one reality is not the mysterious *substratum* which nobody comes across: whatever impresses us must be real, as will appear more fully when in the next chapter we explain the doctrine of efficient causality, and as for the *substratum*, it is not the unapproachable thing which some strangely imagine.

(4) The bulk of what we have to say about accidents has already been said while we were speaking of them in contrast to substance; but a few details have to be added in order to give further insight into the question. The schoolmen divide accidents into different orders, and some keen controversy arises out of the undertaking. They distinguish accidents into absolute and relative, as will be seen by an inspection of the nine Aristotelian categories which belong to accident. In the last chapter we will give the main outlines of the doctrine of relation. The great difficulty, however, springs up when absolute accidents are divided, as by Suarez,<sup>58</sup> into those which are merely modal, so that not even by miracle could they be preserved apart from their substance, and those which by

<sup>58</sup> *Metaphys. Disp. vii. sect. i.*

miracle can be so preserved. The latter are hard not merely to imagine, but even intellectually to conceive, nor would their existence be so confidently affirmed if it were not for the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, which according to the more commonly received doctrine, presents an instance of quantity and qualities continuing to exist as accidents when their substance is gone. The question is, how to regard these so as not to make of them at least imperfect substances? For accident is described not as an entity, but as the entity of an entity; not as that *which is*, but as that *whereby a substance is in some way modified*. St. Thomas<sup>54</sup> makes a distinction, saying that while "accident neither has the character of an essence, nor is a part of the essence as such," yet "just as it is a Being *secundum quid*, or after a manner, so it has an essence *secundum quid*, or after a manner." This is easily illustrated as regards the merely modal accidents; for example, the velocity of a bullet is certainly not identical with the substance of bullet, and yet its reality is to this extent identified with the bullet that it cannot be passed on, as numerically, physically the same velocity, to another bullet. The motion in the bullet may be destroyed, to give rise to other motions in other bodies, but there is no transfer of one identical motion. Now, if the merely modal accident has a reality, though this cannot otherwise be described than after the example just given, how do we know that even a higher reality may not be possible to

<sup>54</sup> *De Ente et Essentia*, c. vii.

some accidents without taking away their character of accidents? Certainly we cannot demonstrate the opposite; and if the fact is proved by the Blessed Sacrament—on which point theologians are not all agreed—at least reason has nothing positive to object.

Suarez is thought by many to have confused the subject by denying to mere modal accidents even such distinct reality as they have, and by giving to the more than modal accidents a distinction from their substance greater than they have. It is complained that he does not allow to the compound being, which is made up of substance and more than modal accident, its full unity of being; that he asserts too much of an actual distinction between substance and accident, while they are actually united; and that hence he is obliged to bring in his "modes of union" as third realities to unite the other two. These are very subtle questions, which it is suggestive to see stated, for they add to the range of our ideas about substance and accident; but we need not prolong the discussion of them here. Even if they should leave in the mind a sense of inability to come to a clear decision, they would not therefore upset so much of well-ascertained doctrine as we have previously established. That mind is very poorly educated which cannot put up with unexplained residua at the end of an inquiry which at least has explained part of what was being investigated; nor would a mystery, like that of the Holy Eucharist, be a mystery, if it were intelligible throughout. There is, then, no

need for going over to agnosticism, because we cannot hunt some notions down to their deepest recesses; just as there is no need to throw away the microscope because it, too, has its limits. A real distinction has been established between substance and accident, and that is a very useful piece of philosophic knowledge; perhaps, an unsolved difficulty has been encountered, and that also is a very useful piece of philosophic experience.

#### NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Our English philosophers have so fixed on Substance as a matter of discussion, and so perverted the notion, that a little more about their doctrines may be acceptable to readers who have an inquisitiveness concerning the disputes which have gathered round this important topic.

(a) James Mill regards substance as a mental fiction, which we might go on multiplying for ever, asserting subject after subject, inherence after inherence; and he puts the whole down to his favourite process of association, whereby he accounts for nearly everything. By association every event calls up the idea of an antecedent or cause, whether this be conceived definitely or only indefinitely, and in the most general terms.<sup>1</sup> "Of this most remarkable case of association, that which we call our *belief in external objects* is one of the most remarkable instances. Of the sensations of sight, of handling, of smell, of taste, which I have from a rose, each is an event: with each of these events I associate the idea of a constant antecedent, a cause." Thus the quality of red is regarded as the cause of the sensation of red; the

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis*, c. xi.

qualities of coexistence and extension as the causes of the sensations of touch ; the qualities of odour and taste as the causes of corresponding sensations. Here quality always stands for an unknown cause or antecedent. "Such is one part of the process. Another is that by which the ideas of those sensations are so intimately united as to appear, not several ideas, but one idea, the idea of a rose. We have now two steps of association : that of the several sensations into one idea, and that of the several sensations each with a separate cause. But we do not stop here : " for *theoretically* we go on ever supposing antecedents beyond antecedents, because we never can regard any antecedent as ultimate. *Practically*, however, we do stop at the notion of a substratum. " The ideas of a number of sensations, concomitant in a certain way, are combined into a single idea, as that of a rose or an apple. The unity which is thus given to the effect is, of course, transferred to the supposed cause, called qualities : they are referred to a common cause. To this supposed cause of supposed causes we give a name *substratum*. It is obvious that there is no reason for stopping at this *substratum* ; for, as the sensation suggested the quality, and the quality the *substratum*, so the *substratum* as properly leads to another antecedent, another *substratum*, and so on from *substratum* to *substratum* without end. These inseparable associations, however, rarely go on beyond a single step, hardly ever beyond two."

This is known as "the regressive process," and is a sore puzzle to puzzle-headed philosophers, but one entirely of their own invention. On the rational explanation that there is one primal Substance, the creator of secondary substances, and that substance in each case is what exists *per se*, the difficulty quite vanishes. It may look very terrible at first to hear that thought



is within faculty, and faculty within mind, and mind within the soul, and the soul within man, and humanity within substance; but some of these distinctions are logical, not real, and even the logical distinctions must come to an end when any further repetition of them serves no rational purpose. Hence we listen unsympathetically to complaints like that of Green:<sup>2</sup> "From mind, as receptive of and operative about ideas, is distinguished mind as 'the substance within us,' of which consciousness is an 'operation' that it sometimes exercises and sometimes does not: and from this thinking substance again is distinguished the man who 'finds it in himself,' and carries it about with him in a coach or on horseback,—the person 'consisting of a soul and body,' who is prone to sleep, and in sound sleep is unconscious."

(b) In his *Logic*, when he tries to keep clear of metaphysical controversies, John S. Mill over and above *phenomena* allows the knowable existence of the *noumenon*, about which we can make a few predications.<sup>3</sup> "Sequences and coexistences are not only asserted respecting phenomena; *we may make propositions also respecting those hidden causes of phenomena which are named substances and attributes.* A substance, however, being to us nothing but either that which causes, or that which is conscious of, phenomena; and the same being true, *mutatis mutandis*, of attributes; no assertion can be made, at least with a meaning, concerning those unknown and unknowable entities, except in virtue of the phenomena by which alone they manifest themselves to our faculties. When we say Socrates was contemporary with the Peloponnesian War, the foundation of this assertion, as of all assertions concerning substance, is an assertion concerning the phenomena which they exhibit.

<sup>2</sup> *Introduction to Hume*, § 131.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. I. c. v. § 5.

*Still the proposition does not assert that alone: it asserts that the thing in itself, the noumenon Socrates was existing, and doing, or experiencing various facts during the same time. Coexistence and sequence, therefore, may be affirmed and denied, not only between phenomena, but between noumena, or between a noumenon and phenomena. And both of noumena and phenomena we may affirm simple existence. But what is a noumenon? An unknown cause. In affirming, therefore, the existence of a noumenon, we affirm causation."* This knowledge of the unknown is a curious piece of philosophy, which is not made less curious by the assertion that whereas "of noumena we may affirm simple existence," as also "coexistence and sequence," yet "existence has to us no meaning but one which has relation to phenomena,"<sup>4</sup> for "as we conceive it, it is merely the power of producing phenomena." To noumena he professes to be unable to apply the fundamental principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle: the reason being, that "we are entirely ignorant" whether these "laws of thought are laws of existence too." No wonder Mr. Mill is anxious to escape from this perplexed state of things; so that in his *Logic* he claims a position of neutrality:<sup>5</sup> "With the opinion which denies noumena I have, as a metaphysician, no quarrel: but whether it be true or false is irrelevant to Logic:" in which sentence, it is fair to add, that he is speaking of the "outer world" only, and does not undertake to say that it has any existence outside our sensations. "We know nothing, and can know absolutely nothing, except the sensations which we experi-

<sup>4</sup> *Examination*, c. xxi. p. 418. (2nd Edit.) Similarly Spencer holds that our ultimate scientific ideas are *symbolical* of the Ultimate Reality, and may be taken as *practically representing it*, but not as making known to us its true nature.

<sup>5</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. iii. § 8, in the note.

ence from it: the distinctions which we verbally make between the properties of things and the sensations we receive from them, must originate in the convenience of discourse, rather than in the nature of what is signified by the terms."<sup>6</sup>

(c) Lewes, in his *Problems of Life and Mind*, suffers from the ordinary scare about an *unknown substratum*. "All we positively know of matter is what its qualities are: and if we group them into a general synthesis, naming the group matter, we are not entitled to infer anything more than is given in the particulars thus grouped. Metaphysicians are, for the most part, all actively engaged in trying to solve the problem of matter by disregarding the known functions, and theorizing on the unknown quantity, disdaining the observable phenomena." However, Lewes cannot agree with Hume's reduction of the mind to an unsubstantial series of states; though, as we have seen before, Hume calls each state a substance so far as it is something which exists by itself. "In denying a mental substratum," says the critic,<sup>7</sup> "Hume was left in a condition of absolute scepticism: he gave a logical unity to consciousness, and supposed that this logical unity was all that was meant when men spoke of real unity."

(d) A short sentence from Mr. Spencer will give an insight into his theory of substance:<sup>8</sup> "Existence means nothing more than persistence; and hence in mind that which persists in spite of all changes, and maintains the unity of the aggregate in defiance of all attempts to

<sup>6</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. iii. § 9. Compare Ferrier's *Remains*, Vol. II. p. 296.

<sup>7</sup> *History of Philosophy*, Vol. II. p. 315. (3rd Edit.)

<sup>8</sup> *Psychology*, Part II. c. i. § 59. We notice that in the Index to the *Epitome* of Mr. Spencer's philosophy by Mr. F. H. Collins, the word *substance* is not found worthy of a place in the Index—a copious Index of twenty-seven pages, double columns.

divide it, is that of which existence in the full sense of the word must be predicated—that which we must postulate as the substance of mind in contradistinction to the varying forms it assumes. But, if so, the impossibility of knowing the substance of mind is manifest.” This “substance of mind” is an “indefinite consciousness,” “the raw material of thought,” which becomes thought as soon as it receives any definite determination by concrete experience. The Unknown Power is ultimately the substance of all things: a doctrine which we have to bear in mind lest we take as too satisfactory sentences which seem to meet our own views as exactly as does the following:<sup>9</sup> “It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a reality of which they are the appearances; for appearances without reality are unthinkable.”

(e) In his *Prolegomena Ethica*, Green says:<sup>10</sup> “Substance is that which is persistent throughout certain appearances. It represents the identical element throughout appearances, that permanent element throughout the times of their appearances, in virtue of which they are not so many different appearances, but connected changes. A material substance is that which remains the same with itself in respect of some of the qualities which we include in our definition of matter—qualities all consisting in some kind of relation—while in other respects it changes. Its character as a substance depends on that relation of appearances to each other in a single order which renders them changes. It is not that first there is a substance, and then certain changes of it ensue. The substance is the implication of the changes, and has no existence otherwise. Apart from the substance no changes, any more than apart

<sup>9</sup> *First Principles*, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Pp. 55, 56.

from the effects any cause. If we choose to say that matter exists as a substance, we merely substitute for the designation of it as consisting in relations, a designation of it as a certain *correlatum* of a certain kind of relation. Its existence as a substance depends on the action of the same self-consciousness upon which the connexion of phenomena by means of that relation depends." We have shown that permanence under change is not the essential idea of substance, and Green's reduction of material substance to relations constituted by the intellect is too idealistic to meet our approval.

(f) Mr. M'Cosh, in getting rid of the unknown substratum as a mere bugbear to Philosophy, gives three requisites for substance. "In saying that the mind is substance we mean nothing more but that in us and in others there is (1) an existing thing, (2) operating, (3) with a permanence. It is high time that those metaphysicians, who defend radical truth, should abandon this unknown and unknowable substratum or noumenon, which has ever been a foundation of ice to those who built upon it. Sir W. Hamilton having handed over this unknown thing to faith, Mr. Spencer has confined religion to it as to its grave. We never know quality without knowing substance, just as we cannot know substance without knowing quality. Both are known in one concrete act; we may, however, separate them in thought. Taking this view, we cannot, without protest, allow persons to speak of substance as being something unknown, mysterious, lying far down in a depth below human inspection. The substance is known quite as much as the quality. We never see an appearance (phenomenon) apart from a thing appearing (noumenon). I understand what is meant by *the thing*: it is the object existing. But what is meant by *the-thing-in-*

*itself*? If *Ding-an-sich* means that there is a thing in addition to the thing as it manifests itself, and as it exercises property, *I allow that for aught I know there may be such a thing*; but believing that no other man on mere philosophic grounds knows any more about it than I do, I protest against it being represented as a support of the thing known, or in any way essential to it."

We have here an admirable lesson as to the attitude which Philosophy should take to Theology. Philosophically Mr. M'Cosh sees no proof for the distinct substratum; neither does he see disproof: therefore his attitude ought to be one of ready acceptance of anything which may appear demonstrable from theologic sources in regard to the distinction between substance and accidents.

(2) Lotze,<sup>11</sup> however badly he may define the term, claims substance as distinctly a matter of experience. "It has been required of any theory which starts from the basis of experience, that in the beginning it should speak only of sensations and ideas, without mentioning the soul to which, it is said, we hasten without justification to ascribe them. I should maintain, on the contrary, that such a mode of setting out involves a wilful departure from that which is actually given in experience. A mere sensation without a subject is nowhere to be met with as a fact. It is impossible to meet with a bare movement without thinking of the mass whose movement it is; and it is just as impossible to conceive a sensation existing without the accompanying idea of that which has it—or rather, of that which feels it, for this also is included in the given fact of experience, that the relation of the feeling subject to its feeling, whatever its other characteristics may be, is in any case something different from the relation of the

<sup>11</sup> *Metaphys.* Bk. III. c. i. § 241.

moved element to its movement. It is thus, and thus only, that sensation is a given fact; and we have no right to abstract from its relation to its subject because this relation is puzzling, and because we wish to obtain a starting-point which looks more convenient, but is utterly unwarranted by experience. In saying this, I do not wish to repeat the frequent but exaggerated assertion, that in every single act of feeling or thinking there is an *express* consciousness which regards the sensation or idea simply as states of a self: on the contrary, every one is familiar with that absorption in the context of a sensuous perception which makes us forget our personality."

(3) Great stress is laid by adversaries on the assertion that if any substance were made known to us, it would be our own; but that about our own selves consciousness testifies only that there are successive states. We answer that these states are reported to us, not in the abstract, but in the concrete, and that the most simple analysis, by reflexion, of what is involved in them, gives us the two elements—permanent substance and its variable modifications at successive times. It is enough if we settle that there is some substance of self: for the purposes of General Metaphysics are satisfied if we prove only that *the most generic* concept of substance is real; as to our knowledge of *specific* substances, that, after the establishment of substance in general, may be judged by what has before been said in the chapter on Essences. Locke, therefore, allowed what we are contending for when he allowed that we are certain of a *substratum* and of its reality.

## CHAPTER II.

### SUBSTANCE AS HYPOSTASIS AND PERSONALITY.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) The way of meeting the bewilderment likely to come on an ordinary mind in presence of the question, What is personality?
- (2) Explanation of personality.
- (3) The wrong and dangerous doctrine of Locke in regard to personality.
- (4) Hume goes still further astray.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(1) A SPECIAL aspect of substance is Personality, and this is too important an idea to be left without explanation. It is just one of those ideas before which an ordinary mind might feel helpless and despondent, having yet to learn a great lesson taught by exercise in philosophic studies, which is, calmly to take a notion and determine how much, so far as we can grasp its object, it includes. Thus only are we able to fix for ourselves the signification of a word, and secure that, in our meaning at all events, the term has no element of vagueness. Unless we acquire this power of precision, we may leave the subject of a discussion so indeterminate that no result can be reached. It was thus in reference to the ship sent annually by the Athenians to Delos ; they disputed



whether it was the same vessel as that in which Theseus sailed a thousand years before. The supposed facts of the case may be assumed to have been tolerably clear to all: what had been changed and what not, probably furnished no serious matter in the dispute; but having no fixed definition as to what they intended to mean by sameness in a ship, they wrangled without conclusion: whereas a succinct statement of the case, ought itself to have solved their difficulty about identity.

(2) All things which can naturally have a separate existence are substances, and every existing substance in nature must be individual. When an individual substance is complete in itself, forming an entire nature, and remaining intrinsically independent, incommunicable, or *sui juris*, it is called a *suppositum* or *hypostasis*, because to it are attributed all the activities and passivities of the thing. The maxim is, *Actiones sunt suppositorum*—"Actions belong to their respective *supposita*." Thus man is a *suppositum*, and to his *suppositum* are attributed the slightest movement of a finger, and the slightest pain of a tooth. The man moves and the man suffers. Hypostasis, therefore, though it has other senses in other connexions, is defined in the present connexion, as *any single substance which is of itself something complete, is not part of another thing, and cannot be regarded as a part*. This of course is said in reference to a physical, intrinsic whole; for extrinsically different *supposita* may be united to form a whole by way of aggregation. That precisely which makes a substance to be a hypostasis is

frequently called its *subsistentia*. Furthermore, the hypostasis or *suppositum*, if intelligent, is called a *person*—a word which meant the “mask” (πρόσωπον) that marked out in the stage-player the character he was sustaining. The mask told who the wearer was, sacrificing facial expression to ruder and more easily perceptible ends, and to the necessities of an enormous theatre, and of a highly idealized form of drama. Boethius defines a person as *the individual substance of rational nature*. It is a notable fact that all the words here are positive, with the disputable exception of “individual,” which, however, may easily be regarded in a positive light.

After we have explained in previous chapters substance, essence, and individuality, so little more remains to be said in order to give the meaning of the term “personality,” that readers are apt to overlook the account unless it is spread over more pages than are really necessary or even helpful to clearness. We have the entire teaching in a nutshell, if, starting with the doctrine that a *suppositum* is a substance, complete as a substance, and complete also as some definite nature, which forms a whole in and by and for itself, we then add that a person is an intelligent *suppositum*. The highest organisms, vegetable or animal, are *supposita*; but in the mineral world, as also in lower forms of life, it is often impossible to assign the different *supposita*. A cup of water is a mere aggregate: perhaps the molecules are *supposita*: but any dispute that arises on this point belongs to the department which has to provide a theory of the constitution of

material substances. We have here again another instance like what we have had before, in which General Metaphysics furnishes the general definition, but does not undertake to settle all its applications within the sphere of each special science.

Every person in the created order will be finite, but if we look back at the definition of personality, we shall find that finiteness is no part of its contents. A person must have indeed one substance distinct from any other substance, but it is nowhere proved that finiteness is essential to this distinct unity. Those who allow the unity and the infinity of God, and also allow that He is other than any of His creatures, should not pretend to a special difficulty on the score of his infinite Personality; any objection of theirs would probably have at its root the error of Spinoza—*omnis determinatio est negatio*, “all determination is negation”—the kindred error of the Scotists that personality is rather negative than positive, and the views of Hamilton and Mansel about limitation. From the mere analysis of the term we should not know whether personality did or did not exclude infinity: but reason can demonstrate that God is both infinite and personal, and this settles the question. Of course, as far as the bare words are concerned, we might have restricted the term “person” to finite natures, and have found another term to be applied to God alone: that would have been a convention permissible in itself, but not without its inconveniences. When we pass on beyond what reason can tell us of the Divine

personality, we come across the revealed doctrine of three Persons in one God. Our definition still meets the requirements, but how it discharges its extended functions cannot be explained in this place.

Besides the Blessed Trinity, another revealed dogma has extended, without contradicting, our natural knowledge of personality; for in the Incarnate Word we are made aware of two distinct natures in the unity of Person. Whence some have concluded that personality is really distinct from the created nature of which it is the determinant; but other theologians see no necessity for such an extraordinary hypothesis. They believe that the Humanity of Christ is not of itself a person, not because of anything that it has lost, but because of something that it has gained. By virtue of its hypostatic union with the Son, it has been elevated to a higher rank without parting with any of its reality. The philosophic bearing of these opinions deserves notice because it shows that, while we labour to make our terms definite and sure as far as our knowledge carries us, we have to remember that for the most part it does not carry us to the comprehensive intelligence of objects in all their length, breadth, and depth. We have a natural knowledge of personality, true as far as it goes, but not exhaustive.

(3) In the last chapter, in the present, and in the next, as well as in other places, we have to single out Locke as one who leads the way in false doctrine; on the subject of personality his view is fatal to the Catholic dogma concerning the Incar-

nation, and would render moral retribution highly unsatisfactory in its arrangements.

Because Locke left scholastic subtleties alone, and took to questions more on the surface of things, he is sometimes praised as a very clear writer. The praise is not warranted on an estimate of his whole work, and in many passages he might stand as a warning example of an obscure involved style. His treatment of personality as that which is constituted by continuous consciousness, is an instance in point, about which subject a man with his mind clear could hardly have penned a complicated sentence like the following:<sup>1</sup> "That which seems to make the difficulty is this, that this consciousness being interrupted always by forgetfulness, there being no moment of our lives wherein we have the whole train of all our past actions before our eyes in one view; but even the best memories losing the sight of one part, whilst they are viewing another, and we sometimes, and that the greatest part of our lives, not reflecting on our past selves, being intent on our present thoughts, and in sound sleep having no thoughts at all, or at least none with that consciousness which marks our waking thoughts: I say, in all these cases, our consciousness being interrupted, and we losing the sight of our past selves, doubts are raised whether we are the same thinking thing—*i.e.*, the same substance or no, which, however reasonable or unreasonable, concerns not personal identity at all; the question being, what makes

<sup>1</sup> *Human Understanding*, Bk. II. c. xxvii. Cf. Descartes, *Med.* iii. p. 74.

the same person? and not whether it be the same identical substance which always thinks in the same person, which in this case matters not at all: different substances by the same consciousness (where they do partake in it) being united into one person, as well as different bodies by the same life are united into one animal, whose identity is preserved in that change of substances by the unity of one continued life." This remarkable utterance may be taken as somewhat typical of the state of Locke's mind on the subject which he is undertaking to discuss. We must try to follow some of the meanderings of his famous twenty-seventh chapter.

He seems to have been moved by the reflexions that the parts of the human body are ever changing; that there might be rational animals, and therefore persons, with bodies quite unlike ours; and that absolutely souls might transmigrate from body to body. In view of these unfixities, he wants some stable test of identity in persons. He distinguishes three identities, those of *substance*, of *man*, and of *person*. The first he places in the extrinsic and unsatisfactory elements of time and place: "We cannot but conceive that each kind of substance must necessarily exclude any of the same kind out of the same place; else the notions of identity and diversity would be in vain, and there could be no such distinction of substance or anything else one from another. Could two bodies be in the same place at the same time, then these two parcels of matter must be one and the same; nay, all bodies must be one and the same, for all bodies may be in one

place." After this inconclusive argument, he goes on to speak of his second kind of identity, that of *man*, which he places "in nothing but a participation of the same continued life by constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession united to the same organized body." It is curious that "man" should thus be limited to matter as organized or vivified, when we remember that Locke was a philosopher who believed in a soul. But let us hasten on to his third kind of identity, with which we are specially concerned. *Personal* identity is continued consciousness: "for nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person; the identity of substance will not do it. So that self is not determined by identity or diversity of substance, which it cannot be sure of, but only by identity of consciousness. . . . Some consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls himself: in this alone consists personal identity, that is the sameness of the rational being." With the courage to follow out his principles, he does not shrink from asserting that could the same consciousness be transferred from one thinking substance to another, these two would form one person; and that contrariwise one and the same spirit, losing old conditions of consciousness and gaining new, would form a plurality of persons. Locke carries his consistency into the region of rewards and punishments. "If the same Socrates waking and sleeping do not partake of the same consciousness, Socrates waking and sleeping is not the same person; and to punish Socrates

waking for what sleeping Socrates thought and waking Socrates was never conscious of, would be no more right than to punish one twin for what the other twin did." Of course it is right not to punish Socrates waking for what Socrates sleeping did : but the reason is not the one assigned by Locke. Our philosopher ventures even to propound and meet a difficulty on the subject. Human law, he objects, rightly punishes a sober man for what he did in his drunkenness, though, on the principle just expounded, there may be two persons here. Yes, answers the objector to himself, because human law, not being able to discriminate when there are two persons here and when not, punishes for the criminal act which can be proved and disregards the unconsciousness of it, which cannot be proved. There are many ethical principles violated at this juncture. The author places the injurious acts done by the sleep-walker, whose state is not his own fault, in the same order with those done by the drunken man, whose state with its foreseen consequences is generally his own fault, proximately or remotely. Again, he uses probability against, instead of in favour of, the accused: saying that because unconsciousness of guilt cannot be proved, consciousness can be presumed. But if we make our presumption from known facts, we may come to a fair conclusion as to whether a man was drunk or not, and then we may add our further piece of knowledge that a really drunken man has not, at the time of his action, a genuine consciousness of wrong-doing. Again, on Locke's principles a



criminal who afterwards lost all memory of his deeds could not be condemned for a whole life of previous crime. An atrocious murderer, who in the interval between his capture and his trial had undergone a sickness which wiped out the recollection of the act from his own mind, would have to be released if he could prove his complete obliviscence. Or, perhaps, there is this subterfuge for Locke, and he is welcome to it. The criminal ought to believe his guilt on the testimony of others: thus once more it enters into his consciousness, and belongs to the culprit's personality. When Locke adds piously, "In the great day, wherein the secrets of hearts shall be laid open, it may be reasonable to think that no one will be made to answer for what he knows nothing of," our philosopher is quite safe in his conjecture, so far as it is expressed; but if it implies that the Judge will ignore all things which men have no memory of when they die, *simply because they have no memory of them*, then the notion is very much astray. On the side of the offended man, "forgive and forget" is often a good maxim to follow; but on the side of the offender forgiveness obtained by means of his own forgetfulness is a doctrine that has not recommended itself even as a heresy.

Locke's teaching about personality may in the end be acknowledged to have these results: (a) it furnishes a definition which would suffice for Hume's theory of man as a series of conscious states without substance: (b) it steers clear of the awkward facts that if there were rational animals

other than man, we should have either to extend the term man, or add to its definition as "rational animal:" and that if human souls did transmigrate, our definition of man's personality would have to accommodate this change. If it be asked whether we cannot further accord to Locke's definition that it gives what personality, as a term, *might* mean, we reply that the word has got its accepted signification too well fixed to allow an individual to change it at will. The most we can grant to Locke is that continued consciousness is one *test* of personality; we cannot grant that it *is* personality. If because of the intimate connexion of thought with personality we permitted Locke to turn thought into personality, how should we resist Cousin, who because personality is asserted specially in the will, says, *La volonté c'est la personne*; and again, *Qu'est-ce que le moi? L'activité volontaire et libre*. A long way the best plan is to keep to the theory that the person of man is the composite nature, body and soul, left in its completeness and *sui juris*; the soul being substantially unchangeable, though variable in its accidental states, the body being constantly changed as to its constituent particles, yet preserving a certain identity, describable only by reciting what are the facts of waste and repair in an organism. It is a great secret in the explanation of many puzzling terms to know, that the only way is concisely to declare the known facts which the word is meant to express. Thus we describe in what man's bodily identity consists so far as we can. A limb may be lost, and that mutilation may be followed by the

loss of another limb; we hardly know the extent to which a body may be deprived of its parts; still so long as the man lives, we know that he is the same person, constituted by the union of the same soul and body. His *integrity* is gone, but not his *personality*.

From Locke's insistence on the connexion between unity of consciousness and unity of personality, though he carries it to an extreme which would logically require the assertion of two persons in Jesus Christ, we may borrow a warning against the *impersonal intelligence*, of which so much is made by many philosophers, of which they can give so little account, and of which their proof, if they attempt one, is so utterly unconvincing. The doctrine is quite to be rejected that a primeval intelligence, impersonal in itself, becomes personal only in finite intelligences such as our own. Probably in the natural condition of things, every finite intelligence is a sign of a single personality; but in the supernatural union of Christ's Humanity with the Person of the Word, the human intelligence foregoes the personality which would otherwise be proper to it, and is taken up by a higher personality in some way quite mysterious to us, and known at all to us, only because we have been told so by absolutely credible authority. Even so we do not come across that most unphilosophical invention of philosophers, "the impersonal intelligence:" for the human intelligence of Christ is personal with the personality of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. If it had not been thus

assumed to a higher hypostasis, it would have had its own natural personality; in all cases it must be personal.

(4) Hume, as usual, carries Locke's expressions to greater extremes; denying the knowableness of any such substantial nature as that which his predecessor undoubtedly considered to underlie the phenomena of consciousness, and which he calls "the identity of man." The most outspoken utterances of Hume are to be found in the Appendix to his *Treatise on Human Nature*. There he plainly confesses the defectiveness of his theory; he owns that "all hopes vanish" when he tries to explain, on his principles, the bonds which unite the successive states of consciousness. Nevertheless he abides by his own philosophy, because "all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences." Hence, pleading "the privileges of a sceptic," there is nothing for him but to acknowledge himself at present beaten by "a difficulty too hard" for his understanding. Still he is a sceptic only in the etymological sense; he does not finally renounce the knowledge of the truth, he merely avows that for him truth is *yet to seek*. Perhaps even still, "upon mature reflexion," he may be so lucky as to "discover some hypothesis that will reconcile the contradictions." Meantime he can give this account of his own personality: "For my part when I enter into what I call myself, I always tumble upon some particular perception or other; I can never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and can

never observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I insensible of myself, and may be truly said not to exist. . . . Setting aside some metaphysicians, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement. . . . There is properly no simplicity in the mind at one time, nor identity in different." Thus personality is "a fiction of the imagination;" it is "the smooth passage of our thoughts along our resembling perceptions, that makes us ascribe to them an identity." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Treatise I. iv. § 2. Mr. Spencer's views are given in his *Psychology*, Part VII. cc. xvi. and xvii. He is mostly concerned with distinguishing between the objective "vivid states" of consciousness, and subjective "faint states," and showing the intermediate position of a man's own body in relation to the two classes. "In some way or other there is attached to the faint aggregate a particular portion of the vivid aggregate, and this is unlike all the rest as being a portion always present, as having a special coherence among its components, as having known limits, as having comparatively restricted and well-known combinations, and especially as having in the faint aggregate the antecedents of its most conspicuous changes, which prove to be the means of settling up special changes in the rest of the vivid aggregate. This special part of the vivid aggregate, which I call my body, proves to be a part through which the rest of the vivid aggregate works changes in the faint, and through which the faint works certain changes in the vivid. And in consequence of its intermediate position, I find myself now regarding this body as belonging to the vivid aggregate, and now as belonging to the same whole as the faint aggregate, to which it is intimately related." These are fair specimens of the best things Mr. Spencer has left to say; after he has renounced all right to speak of a substance of body or of mind, and has left himself nothing

It is not necessary to examine later developments of Hume; but there is one recent investigation which should be mentioned in connexion with the reduction of personality to conscious states. Because of the duality or even higher plurality, which can be produced apparently in consciousness by certain morbid conditions, some speak of a multiplicity of persons in one man: we must reject the phrase in its literal sense, because of the reasons already given. It is no wonder if with our complex conditions there are abnormal states, in which consciousness is said to testify to strange things. This alleged testimony, however, especially when the report is given on the mere memory of a past condition of disturbance, cannot be accepted with implicit trust, for the memory of a period of abnormal action may easily be distorted.

to describe but two ultimately distinguished groups of faint and of vivid feelings, which have, as the mediator between them, the philosopher's own aggregate of feelings which he calls his body. It is only Hume continued. To account for the common opinion Mr. Spencer adds, "There is an illusion that at each moment the *Ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual or nascent, which then exists." (c. ix. § 220.)

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) It was undoubtedly Christianity which set men inquiring more carefully into the nature of personality, for the two prime mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation turned on this idea. The maxim, *actiones sunt suppositorum*, obtained for the latter of the two dogmas a great significance, which brought out the unity and the dignifying influence of personality. Reid insists that a person must be taken as a monad, as a whole, and never as a part; and this is eminently true in estimating the worth of Christ's human actions. "All men," he says,<sup>1</sup> "place their personality in something that cannot be divided. . . . When a man loses his estate, his health, his strength, he is still the same person and has lost nothing of his personality. If he has a leg or an arm cut off, he is still the same person as before. . . . My personal identity, therefore, implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself. Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers. My thoughts and actions and feelings change every moment—they have no continued, but a successive existence; but the self or I to which they belong is permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions, and feelings, which I call mine."

From these words some might gather that only the thinking principle in man is his person; indeed, we hear it said, "Man is a soul." But if we keep to our definition, and if we remember that the body is an

<sup>1</sup> *Intellectual Powers*, Essay iii. c. iv. p. 345.

essential constituent of human nature, we must include it also in the personality.

(2) The dignity of personality is explained by Schelling as consisting in "lordship." As Chalybäus<sup>2</sup> interprets him, "To be lord over one's existence constitutes the idea of personality—to be lord over all existence constitutes the idea of absolute personality. The Deity is such from the beginning." So much truth as underlies these words has been given by us, when we described a person as *sui juris*: to the conscious personal Being its own existence is *for itself*, and whatsoever other existences serve its known ends, so far they also are *for it*, even though a Higher Lord may claim to be the absolutely ultimate centre of reference.

(3) Self-consciousness is no doubt closely connected with personality, and has a special power in making a thing *exist for itself*. Lotze, speaking of the very common theory that all things have souls, says that his own reasoning on the point "does not demand anything more than that there should belong to things, in some form or other, *that existence as an object for itself* which distinguishes all spiritual life from what is only *an object for something else*."<sup>3</sup> "Hence," he says, "we must believe that there are other *persons* like ourselves, but not that there are any mere *things*." Holding the monistic doctrine that there is only one *Being*, within this Being he allows only such objects to claim an existence of their own as can refer their states to a self. "It is so far as something is an object to itself, relates itself to itself, distinguishes itself from something else, that by this act of its own it detaches itself from the Infinite. . . . Whatever is in a condition to feel and assert itself as a self is entitled to be described as *outside* the all-

<sup>2</sup> *History of Speculative Philosophy*, p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Metaphysics*, Bk. I. c. vii. §§ 97, seq.



comprehensive Being." Dr. Martineau is not a follower of Lotze, but, in denying to mere things, and indeed to all objects that have not free-will, a real causality, he comes near to the German philosopher.<sup>4</sup> "All cosmic power is Will; and all cosmic Will is God's. The natural forces are numerically distinguished, only because they are assembled in different families of phenomena, but dynamically, they pass to and fro; they are subject to the same measure; they are substantially indifferenced; and the unity to which they converge is nothing else than His. He is the one cause in nature, acting in various modes, and to all else among physical things that has borrowed the name, we may give a free discharge. We cannot have these 'second causes' idle on our hands." The only "second cause" is personal, and created personality is thus contrasted with the physical universe.<sup>5</sup> "In the ultra-physical sphere, the whole tendency is precisely the reverse, viz., away from the original unity of power into differentiation and multiplicity, the end pursued by the will of the Creator is here to set up what is *other* than himself and yet akin, to mark off new centres of self-consciousness and causality, that have their separate history and build up a *free personality like his own*. We have seen how conceivable it is that, without prejudice to the Providential order of the world, he should realize this end, by simply *parting with a portion of his power to a deputed agent*, and abstaining so far from necessary law. Now this Divine move, this starting of minds and characters, making the universe alive with multiplied causality, is quite different from the transitory waves of physical change that skim their deep and lapse: it brings upon the stage, *not an event*,

<sup>4</sup> *A Study of Religion*, Vol. II. p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* pp. 364, 365.

but *an existence* : not an existence merely, but *an ordering and electing and creative existence*, a thinking power which is not a mere phenomenon of the Supreme Mind, for *that* would not constitute a mind at all: how can a state of one conscious subject be another conscious subject? . . . *Personality* is not the largest, but it is the highest fact in the known cosmos." Our next chapter will discuss "second causes," and we shall see whether that title is to be denied to all impersonal objects.

(4) Some wonder that Catholic theologians insist so much on the *personal* character of the offence which is committed in sin against God, and they would lay more stress on the intrinsic inordinateness of acts. But if we take as the complement of *actiones sunt suppositorum*, the maxim, *passiones sunt suppositorum*, then we shall see the propriety of measuring sin especially by personal considerations. It is true that there must be intrinsic inordinateness in the sinful acts themselves; but given this, we gauge its full deformity only by looking at it on the personal side. We have not the complete idea of sin till we have grasped it as a crime committed by a personal agent against a personal superior. It has been by tracing the work of the actions of the Man Christ to His Divine Personality, that Catholic theologians have, by contrast, become so keenly alive to the personal element in sin. Moral worth is essentially something personal, even though in finite agents at least, the personal worth of the doer of a deed is not straightway the worth of the deed, which has to be judged by its object and circumstances, but still the personal element has all that importance which we have declared it to have.

## CHAPTER III.

### CAUSALITY.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) Various sorts of causality ; selection of efficient causality for special treatment.
- (2) The opposition made to efficient causality, (a) on the part of "Occasionalists," who allow its reality ; but attribute it directly to God, and (b) on the part of pure Empiricists who deny it to be a known reality.
- (3) Proof (a) that there is efficient causality in the world, and (b) that this causality is not divine but mundane.
- (4) Explanation of some statements about efficient causality, which need clearing up : (a) "The effect is like its cause." (b) "The cause is prior to its effect." (c) "The same cause under the same circumstances has always the same effect." (d) "On the cessation of the cause the effect sometimes ceases, sometimes not." (e) "A cause is more than a condition."

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(I) A WIDER term than *cause* is *principium*, or *principle*, which is defined to be,<sup>1</sup> "that from which anything in any way proceeds," whether the bond between the two be intrinsic, or only extrinsic ; whether it be real, or only logical. In Logic the premisses are the principles whence the conclusion follows ; in the order of knowledge they are theoretically supposed to stand first, and it comes after ; but in the order of real sequence it may very well be the other way about, as when from observed effects we infer the producing causes. Here, how-

<sup>1</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xxxiii. a. i.

ever, we have not to treat of logical "principiation," but of real.

The order of priority is three-fold: it may be that of *mere time*, as when January the 1st, according to our calculation, is called the principle whence the year starts: it may be that of *nature*, in which priority of time may or may not be included, as when the essence of a creature is said to be the principle of its "*propria*," that is, of its peculiarly inseparable attributes, or the soul is said to be the principle of life in the body: and lastly it may be that of *origin*, a name devised to express that the Father is principle of the Son, and the Father and the Son form the joint principle of the Holy Ghost, without any priority or superiority either of time or of nature.

Principle, as expressing priority of nature, leads us to the general idea of cause, which is defined, *A principle which by its influence determines the existence of something else: or a principle which in some way furnishes the ground for the existence of an object; a principle which of itself gives birth to something else.*<sup>2</sup> In some cases the otherness of the effect from the cause is obvious: but there are also cases in which it is not so unmistakeable, because the cause enters in as a constituent of the total result, which is called the effect. Yet in all cases, without exception, St. Thomas<sup>3</sup> insists that there is an otherness in the shape of some perfection produced: hence a thing that is simply self-

<sup>2</sup> Suarez, *Metaphys.* Disp. xii. sect. ii. n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xxxiii. a. i. ad 1.

*caused*, according to our definition of causality, is an impossibility. If ever God is styled the cause of Himself, the phrase is an inaccuracy; we should say God is self-existent, or is His own sufficient reason. Moreover, His immanent action is quite identical with His substance, and has therefore no strict causality; His thoughts and volitions, for example, viewed apart from any external effect that they produce outside God, are thus identified with the Divine Essence: whereas in the immanent action of creatures the agent as agent is distinguishable from the agent as patient. We distinguish the soul as productive of thought from the result, the soul as informed by its own thought: but what precisely the distinction is Psychology must say.

Though Lewes has declared the four Aristotelic causes to be "not verifiable, inadequate, and unscientific," we must take leave to set aside the verdict as not sound. Reid<sup>4</sup> had previously objected against them that they could not be called causes for want of a common generic concept, to which difficulty Hamilton had replied that "they have this much in common, that each is an antecedent, which not being given, the consequent called the effect would not be." Our sufficient reply is, that each comes under the definition which we have assigned to cause in general, as that which is a *principle of Being to another*, or *that upon which the Being of another depends*.

*Material* and *formal* causes are such, that each contributes itself as a constituent of the whole

<sup>4</sup> *Active Powers*, Essay i. c. vi.

which results from the union of the two. Not by mere mutual interaction, but by mutual self-communication, they combine to produce the total effect ; so that if the subject is said to *support* the form, this *support*, though grammatically it is represented as an action, is not physically an action in the ordinary sense of the word, as when a pedestal supports by its action a statue. Accidental unions of the kind are such as those between marble and its form in a piece of sculpture, and between the mind and its thought : while the connexion of soul and body is an instance of substantial union between matter and form. No mere presence in space or dynamic interaction will suffice for such union : the two causes are constituent, not efficient.. Nevertheless, not all constituents are straightway to be ranked as matter or form in relation to one another : but only such as stand to one another as recipient, determinable subject, and determination received. That relations of this kind are entered upon so as to produce definite effects cannot be denied, and practically is not denied, even by those who theoretically ridicule the whole conception of matter and form ; the only controvertible question is whether the schoolmen have pushed the idea too far, and such controversy is out of place here.

It is impossible to explain at any length material and formal causality without entering upon Special Metaphysics : and therefore we must rest content with indicating two of the questions which will be found to have received due attention in other treatises ; in *Cosmology* the discussion about the ulti-

mate constitution of matter, and in *Psychology* the discussion about the substantial union between man's soul and body, bring out pretty nearly all that the schoolmen have to say on matter and form.

The *final* cause is another subject which receives its fullest degree of attention in the treatise on Natural Theology. There, under the heading of the Argument from Design, authors inquire what evidences of a planning mind are to be discovered even in the physical universe; whether all the laws and the harmonious working together of the material elements to constitute a cosmos, can be ultimately attributable to blind forces acting uniformly throughout indefinitely long ages. Again, philosophers frequently discuss whether vegetable and animal<sup>5</sup> organisms have risen up spontaneously and without foresight, or whether they point irresistibly to an intelligent Creator. Lastly, the finite intelligence itself is taken into account, and the inquiry is made whether it originated out of blind elements without design on the part of some Supreme Intelligence. This sketch is enough to show how completely the subject of teleology is discussed in the scholastic system. If we start from the most certain testimony of consciousness, it is thereby put beyond reasonable doubt, that we are induced, by ends which we propose to ourselves as desirable, to carry out even long series of works in order to achieve such ends. They clearly are causes in our

<sup>5</sup> In the living organism the tendency to an organic end—so clear that Clifford has called organization "the good"—is much insisted on, as *Zweckstrebigkeit*, *Zweckmässigkeit*.

regard, not because they compel our efforts, but because at any rate they solicit them, and call forth our energies, which would remain inactive if there were no solicitation brought to bear upon them. When a man, who perhaps otherwise would have been a sluggard, makes it the struggle of a lifetime to carry out his fixed purpose of becoming Prime Minister of England before he dies ; when one who has spent half his days in idle luxury is suddenly roused to intense activity in order to repair the fortunes of his house which he has ruined, it would be a lamentable sacrifice of truth to some pet theory if certain philosophers persisted in maintaining that final causes had no real influence. So real is their influence that we may call them even *efficient* causes, if only we remember that their efficiency is of a peculiar character—one which is adapted to the manner of acting proper to a moral agent, who is moved not physically, but through his intelligence and will. It is no part of the doctrine of free-will, as adversaries sometimes suppose,<sup>6</sup> that it maintains motiveless action ; on the contrary, it holds that motives are quite necessary, and that freedom consists in following the call of one motive in preference to another. The error is rather with some of the opponents of free-will, who while they scout the notion of motiveless action, yet deny that motives, when regarded precisely as intellectual motives, have any causality. Mr. Huxley considers it probable that the conscious phenomenon in man

<sup>6</sup> Even Reid thinks that there may be capricious, acts "without all motive," and even "against all motive." (*Works*, p. 51.)



is a mere concomitant of the choice, in no degree a determinant. We take up the position that final causality is absolutely demonstrable from an analysis of our own conduct, about which we cannot be deceived.

Final causes include the main object at which we aim, or the end to be reached (*finis qui*); the actual possession, or the actual production of this object, accordingly as it is a *finis possidendus* or a *finis efficiendus*, a goal to be reached, like the summit of a mountain, or a work to be accomplished, like the carving of a statue (*finis quo*); and lastly, the person for whose sake the object is sought, whether this be self or not-self (*finis cui*, or *cujus gratia*).

The *exemplary* cause is such as guides the artist in the execution of his work, whether it be the copying of a masterpiece, or the realization of an original conception. God who created all things, not unintelligently, but according to His own prototypic ideas, used these as *exemplary* causes. These may also be regarded as *formal* causes, if we remember that they are extrinsic, not intrinsic, to their matter.

But our chief concern in this chapter is with *efficient* causality in the strict sense, as defined by Aristotle, "a principle of change in another." The definition is variously reproduced thus: "That which by the activity of its powers makes something to be which before was not;"<sup>7</sup> "That which

<sup>7</sup> The *before* is generally understood of time: but if any one believes that creation *ab aeterno* is possible, then he would have to accommodate the meaning of *before*, and of any other such term, to his own theory.

transfers from non-existence to existence what was incapable of self-existence ;” “That from the real physical activity of which the production of something follows.” To defend this definition will be our task : but we will premise a few points of detail, not indeed necessary to our main object, but still useful. One observation especially deserves attention, namely, the relation of efficient causality to the chapter on Possibility. In that chapter what we called *intrinsic* possibility mainly engaged our attention, and of *extrinsic* possibility we said very little. The treatment here of efficient causation supplies the previous omission.

Answering to every *action* is a corresponding *passion*, at least if we leave out of account simple creation from nothing, where in reference to the whole object the *passion* is metaphorical rather than literal. Again, action is *transient* or *immanent* according as it passes out of the agent or abides in it as in a subject : the action of one billiard ball on another is transient, the action of the thinking faculty is immanent. In both cases, though in less degree for one than for the other, the schoolmen assert some distinction between agent and patient ; because even in immanent agency, the agent as active and productive must be somehow different from itself as passive and receptive. It is an opinion, which St. Thomas at least in certain places approves,<sup>8</sup> that the action and the passion, are the same thing under different relations ; the action is the effect as dependent on the cause, the

<sup>8</sup> In Lib. III. *De Anima*, c. ii ; *Sum.* i. q. xlv. a. ii.

passion is the same effect as received by the subject. At this point Suarez<sup>9</sup> has a subtle argument whereby he wants to establish a modal distinction between the action and its term: but this is a delicate question which we may leave for defter hands to manipulate, as our broad inquiry turns on much more tangible pivots. If however it is remarked upon as strange, that by the above theory we have as a result that the action is in the patient, the schoolmen reply that under one aspect it is, in another it is not: as that which is produced and received into a subject, the action is in the patient; but so far as the agency producing and communicating the action belongs to the efficient cause, the action was in the latter potentially. Suarez further teaches that by acting the agent *qua agent*, if we regard the matter in ultimate analysis, makes no change in itself, but only in the patient. To do justice to this assertion we must observe that it does not exclude the facts so obvious, at least in material changes, that every action is repaid by reaction, so as to make every agent also a patient; and also that in a complex agent one part acts upon another, so as notably to change the agent as a whole.<sup>10</sup> For example, in severe bodily labour man in his entirety undergoes many changes. But to understand the

<sup>9</sup> *Metaphys.* Disp. xlviii. sect. ii. "Actio non est nisi quidam modus ipsius termini illum constituens dependentem a sua causa: est habitudo viæ ad terminum."

<sup>10</sup> Hence the otherness between cause and effect must be taken for neither more nor less than is required by the definition of active power, *principium mutationis in alio quatenus est aliud*, and of passive power, *principium recipiens mutationem ab alio, quatenus est aliud*.

aspect from which action works no change in the agent *as an agent*, we should have to take a simpler case than ever our rude experience brings us across.<sup>11</sup>

From these subtleties let us pass to the more tangible matter of dispute. We have to settle whether that on which all science ultimately rests, namely, efficient causality, is real: and the subject is so vital that Hobbes was near the truth when, as he tells us, it dawned upon him quite in a startling light, that the most important philosophic question a man can put to himself is, Why does anything pass from rest to motion, whether it be in physics, or ethics, or politics?

(2) If we wish for anything like thoroughness in our appreciation of the controversy about efficient causality, we must not shrink from the inquiry into what has been actually maintained on the point by the champions of each side; and if we have anything like a philosophic temper, we shall deem such inquiry interesting rather than wearisome. Our opponents may be divided into two great classes: (a) those who fully allow the fact of causality, but think that certainly in regard to matter, and perhaps in regard to mind, God must be the sole cause of the activities; and (b) those who, equivalently abolishing causality, reduce it to mere constancy of sequence. We will take each of the pair separately.

<sup>11</sup> This important point, the source of so much confusion, is fully explained later, where it will be seen how very vague is man's ordinary conception of *the cause* and *the effect*, where there are *many causes* and *many effects*. It is vague as with many logicians is *the induction*.

(a) Occasionalism, which we find St. Thomas already in his time opposing,<sup>12</sup> is the name under which the first doctrine that we have to attack is known. It teaches that created things are the mere occasions on which the Divinity takes the opportunity to act conformably to the requirements of the objects present. This theory is specially characteristic of the school of Descartes, and is in intimate connexion with the reduction of matter by that philosopher to extension, with inertia for its chief property. Matter, according to him, can itself do nothing: it is a mere receptivity and channel of communication or transference for the motion imparted by the Creator: it can hand about movement from particle to particle, but it cannot originate or destroy any; and thus it is opposed to mind, the very essence of which is thought or activity. Matter is inert extension, thought is ever-operative inextension. One short paragraph in the *Principia*<sup>13</sup> is a complete exposition of the theory: "We must consider motion in its two causes, the primary and universal cause, to which is due all the motion that is in the world, and the particular cause to which it is due that various portions of matter acquire the movements which before they had not. As to the former, it is evident to me that it must be attributed to God Himself, who in the beginning created matter along with motion and rest, and ever since has preserved these in the same quantity. For, though motion is nothing but a mode in the thing which is moved, yet it is of a definite amount that

<sup>12</sup> *Contra Gent.* Lib. III. c. lxix.

<sup>13</sup> Pt. II. § 36. Cf. § 42.

remains constant for the whole universe, though it varies in regard to the several parts." This constancy the author connects with God's attribute of Immutability. He continues: "Whence it follows that it is most consonant to reason for us to suppose that God always preserves in the world just so much motion as He impressed on it at its first creation." To the soul Descartes allows an activity of its own, but subject to certain qualifications which he fails definitely to express; for he wavers in his view as to the innateness of ideas, and as to the power of intellect to form its own notions on the occurrence of sensible experiences; while he clearly commits himself to the argument that a God must exist, because only as a gift from Him could finite intellect possess its idea of the infinite.

A disciple of the master—namely, Geulinx, carries his principles to the extreme of rendering both body and soul passive subjects under the Divine hand, denying as well the influence of soul upon body—which Descartes allowed—as that of body upon soul. His doctrine in brief is, "Secondary causes have no activity of their own"—*Causæ secundæ non agunt*.

Another Cartesian, somewhat more moderate, is Malebranche,<sup>14</sup> who quite denies all activity proper to matter, and goes near to making the soul inactive, but saves himself in a sort of mistiness of expression. He fully agrees with his master that all the movement which is to be found in things material is from God, but does not appear to care

<sup>14</sup> *Recherche de la Vérité*, Liv. I. c. i.; Liv. VI. Pt. II. c. iii.

much for the addition that the sum-total of motion was communicated at the first Creation; while as to the soul he allows it only one mode of immediate intuition—namely, self-consciousness, all other objects being known to it “through the medium of ideas,” which are derived from the intimate presence of God to the mind. It is by his express repudiations that Malebranche saves himself from the charge of some awkward inferences which might be drawn out of his principles in favour of pantheism, and of a direct vision of God in Himself. No doubt he was a pious, well-meaning man, but often not a wise one; and his system cannot be maintained in anything like its substance.

Among our English philosophers many in past, and even in present days, must be ranked with the occasionalists as regards material bodies. Cudworth’s remark is good as far as it goes,<sup>15</sup> “that it seems not so agreeable to Nature, that Nature, as a distinct thing from the Deity, should be quite superseded, or made to signify nothing, God Himself doing all the things immediately.” Clarke was openly an occasionalist in respect to matter; Locke sets the question aside as not properly coming in his way, yet describes material impulse as the mere transfer of impressed motion.<sup>16</sup> Reid and Stewart decidedly tend to occasionalism. The former says:<sup>17</sup> “Whether the Creator acts immediately in the pro-

<sup>15</sup> *Intellectual System*, Bk. I. c. iii. sect. xxxvii.

<sup>16</sup> *Human Intellect*, Bk. II. c. xxi. and c. xxvi. Cf. pp. 58, 59, 66, 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Active Powers*, Essay i. c. v.

duction of events in the natural world, or by subordinate intelligent agents, or by instruments that are unintelligent—these I suppose to be mysteries placed beyond the limits of human knowledge. The active power of which alone we can have any distinct conception can be only in beings that have understanding and will. Power to produce any effect implies power not to produce [a confusion between power in general and power of choice]; we can conceive no way in which power may be determined to one of these rather than to another in a Being that has no will.” “We are unable to conceive any active power to be exerted without will. The only distinct conception I can form of an active power is that which is an attribute in a Being, by which he can do certain things if he wills. This is, after all, only a relative conception. It is relative to the effect and to the will producing it. Take away these and the conception vanishes. They are the handles by which the mind takes hold of it. When they are removed our hold is gone. If any man, therefore, affirms that a Being may be the efficient cause of an action which that Being can neither conceive nor will, he speaks a language which I do not understand. It seems to me, then, most probable that such things only as have some degree of understanding and will can possess active power; and that inanimate Beings must be wholly passive. Nothing we perceive without us affords us any good ground for ascribing active power to any inanimate Being; and everything we can discover in our own constitution leads us to think that active



power cannot be exerted without will and intelligence." The consequence of this opinion, which we often find re-affirmed by English writers, is that though science were to reduce all sensible phenomena to their laws, it would, as Reid himself remarks, only assign the rules according to which *some* cause works, but it would not prove that cause to be matter itself.<sup>18</sup> Stewart at first sight seems to go further than Reid, and positively to assert occasionalism in regard to matter; for he affirms,<sup>19</sup> that "*power, force, energy, and causation* are all attributes of mind, and can exist in mind only:" but a closer inspection of the context will show that his meaning may be to say, as Reid does, that *we know* no force but that of will, and that the phrase, "material force," is addressed only to our ignorance, on the strength of an obscure analogy between will and bodily movement. Distinguishing "metaphysical or efficient causes" from "physical," the latter of which means only constancy of antecedent to consequent, he maintains that physical science has to do only with "physical causes," and that "we know nothing of physical events but the laws which regulate their succession." Soon afterwards, if his words are to be taken literally, he distinctly contemplates the *possibility* of matter being an efficient cause; for speaking of the popular rejection of *actio in distans*, he says: "That one body may be the efficient cause of the motion of another body placed at a distance from it, I do by

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* c. vi.

<sup>19</sup> *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Pt. I. c. i. § 11.

no means assert ; but only that we have as good reason to believe that this may be possible as to believe that any one natural event is the efficient cause of another." With the examples now given we may suppose the doctrine of occasionalism to have been sufficiently illustrated, so that its meaning and the reasons for it are clearly before the mind.

(b) The next theory to be considered, while retaining the name, virtually abolishes the notion of causality altogether ; and Hume is the prime representative of this doctrine. The truth about his theory may be conveyed in three statements : (i.) First, he sometimes argues as though he were going on the supposition of real efficient causality, and labours to prove merely that causality is known to us by its effects alone, while its inmost nature cannot be penetrated by our methods of inquiry. We get no insight into the mode of causality, how it is that agents work, and why their effects are what they are. With this assertion we very largely agree. (ii.) Secondly, he argues that from *single experiences* of any kind we have no "impression of power," and hence can have no valid "idea" of it from this source ; but after *frequent experiences* of similar sequences, custom produces in us "a feeling" or an "impression of power." (iii.) Thirdly, he teaches that this idea of power does not carry us beyond the knowledge of invariable sequence ; it does not give us efficient causality ; we have no notion of one thing literally acting by its influence upon another. Mill tries to improve on this doctrine, but not with much success ; both authors deny

causality in its proper sense. The details of their criticism, very important for the right understanding of much modern thought, but too long for the body of this chapter, may be found in the first of the notes at the end of it; they require a little patient reading, but not very deep thought.

(3) The proposition which has now to be proved must be reduced to its most generalized conditions by abstraction from all those connected questions, each of which opens out a field of endless controversy. It can be so detached. We can leave out, for instance, the consideration how created agents act, whether immediately by their substance or through really distinct faculties; and whether any effects from created causes are new substances, or only modifications in pre-existing substances. Again, we can omit the extremely difficult problem of isolating any case so as to get precisely *this* as cause and *that* as effect: for every case that we can select, no matter how simple in appearance, is sure to contain more complexities than we can well unravel. Not to take the simplest example, but to take one which, for the ordinary mind, would seem simple enough, let us suppose a drunkard sleeping out in the field at night, bringing on a very severe attack of pneumonia, and dying. His friends would say variously, and with great assurance, "it was all owing to the drink," "to the cold night air," "to the misfortune of sleep having come on," "to the severity of the inflammation," "to delay in sending for the doctor," "to having summoned Dr. A. instead of Dr. B." The fact is, the process has many

steps of successive causes and effects, and to follow them all out in detail baffles human skill.<sup>20</sup> After having given a few specimens of the particulars which might make our path a thorny one, we return to our declaration that we undertake to show, only in most general terms, that in this world of real changes there must be efficient causes to bring them about, else evolution or development, and decline or retrogression, would give place, if to anything, then to a dead level of perpetual sameness.

(a) We begin with two uncontrovertible assertions, that there are real changes in our universe, and that there must be for these a sufficient reason or cause, wherever that cause may reside. To declare with the Eleatics that change is nothing, is absurd, and it is only an extreme of Hume's<sup>21</sup> unreasonableness which can account for his words: "We can never demonstrate the necessity of a cause to every new existence, or new modification of existence, without showing at the same time the impossibility there is that anything can ever begin to exist without some productive principle. Now, that the latter proposition is utterly incapable of a demonstrative proof, we may satisfy ourselves by considering *that all distinct ideas are separable from each other, and as the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct, it will be easy for us to consider any object to be non-existent this moment and exist the next, without conjoining to it the*

<sup>20</sup> Some of the scholastics overlook this complexity, and try to bridge over the difficulty by a not very clear use of their distinction of effect *in fieri* and *in facto esse*. The effect *in fieri* is often a long succession of effects.

<sup>21</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. III. sect. iii.

*distinct idea of a cause or productive principle.* The separation, therefore, of the idea of a cause from that of a beginning is plainly possible for the imagination, and consequently the actual separation of these objects is so far possible, that it implies no contradiction or absurdity."<sup>22</sup> For it is a principle which Hume adopts, that what is conceivable is possible.

To those who instead of a mechanical association of units, called ideas, believe in man's power of rational insight into objective truth, it is clear that the only sufficient account of real change is what we designate by the term "efficient causality." Whatever before was not, and now begins to be, owes its being to something other than itself. The otherness may not be complete, but at least it is partial, for even an *immanent* agent under the aspect of its power to produce an effect is distinguished from the same agent under the aspect of its receptivity of that effect in itself as subject, and from the effect received. No real act is without real effect, though the effect be identical with the act. All science depends on holding these principles, and not only all science in the grander meaning of the word, but likewise in the meaning of all genuine knowledge.

The dynamic aspect of the world is, therefore, as real as the static; the universe presents problems of kinetics as well as kinematics. We must admit something which is as truly an *agent* as it is a *Being*,

<sup>22</sup> Remember that Hume allowed only two absolute contradictions, *existence* and *non-existence*: his name for them is, *contraries*.

which *acts* as truly as *it is*. Where this agency is we leave an open question for the present; but a real agency we prove to exist.

In support of the universal recognition of efficient causes Reid appeals to the unmistakable tokens of conviction among mankind.<sup>23</sup> "The arguments which I have adduced," he says, "are taken from these five topics: That there are many things which we can affirm and deny concerning power with understanding: That there are in all languages words signifying not only power, but signifying among other things that empty power, such as action and passion, cause and effect, energy, operation, and others: That in the structure of all tongues there is an active and a passive form in verbs, and a different construction adapted to these forms, of which diversity no account can be given but that it has been intended to distinguish action from passion: That there are many operations of the human mind familiar to every man come to the use of reason, and necessary in the ordinary conduct of life, which imply some degree of power in ourselves and in others: That the desire of power is one of the strongest passions of human nature." One always regrets that Reid, who says so much which is good about the real power of created will, should also have said so much against any real power proper to material things, and should have lamented that<sup>24</sup> "even the great Bacon seems to have thought that there is a *latens processus*, as he

<sup>23</sup> *Active Powers*, Essay i. c. iii.; *Intellectual Powers*, Essay vi. c. vi. § 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Works*, p. 76.

calls it, by which natural causes really produce their effects."

The argument for the bare fact of efficient causality must be completed by the settlement of a question which arises as to the immediacy of the perception in regard to the abstract principle. The inquiry is, whether the general principle, that every new reality must have a cause, is immediately evident, or whether it is, as Mill contends, an induction from experience. To save himself from the vicious circle of grounding Induction on the principle of Causality and the principle of Causality on Induction, Mill<sup>25</sup> distinguishes a *natural* knowledge of the principle which precedes the inductive proof, from the *scientific* knowledge which is the outcome of that proof. In behalf of the need of an induction, Mill argues from the fact of the very tardy acquiescence of mankind in the reign of law, or in the belief that things do not happen at hazard, but all according to definite causation. We reply that rude peoples are not so much astray about the abstract principle, that whatever happens must have a cause, as about its application. They see so much happen for which they cannot account, and they are so accustomed to the freaks of their own free-will, that they overlook the need of an account to be rendered for every event, or they find that account in a cause called Fate, which is the impersonation of the freakish Will. But whatever may be the explanation of the blunders of the incompetent, when we rationally consider the principle of causality, we have a right

<sup>25</sup> *Logic*, Bk. III. c. xxi. § 2 and § 4.

to pronounce it immediately evident, or if we like to resolve it into elements, we may.<sup>28</sup> It contains the propositions: Every thing must have a *sufficient reason* why it is rather than is not, and why it is thus rather than otherwise: The only sufficient reason for a real change is *efficient causality*: Therefore every real change has an efficient cause. So worded the principle escapes the charge of tautology, to which it is liable as long as it stands in this shape, "Every effect must have a cause."

(b) So far we may claim to have established that we do find efficient causality at work in the world; the next point we have to prove is, that this causality is not simply Divine, but that creatures act. We will begin the inquiry by another question about immediacy, Have we any immediate perception of created causality itself, or is it all at best a matter of inference? The answer depends largely on our way of talking, and is akin to the difficulty found by logicians in discriminating what they call immediate inferences from inferences in strict syllogistic form. At least it may be affirmed that man has immediate consciousness of his own activity, as that of which he is the cause, in *some* of the acts of the will. If it is objected that consciousness testifies to *facts*, but not to what philosophers often call the *how* of facts, we deny the assertion to be universally true, otherwise we should not know some acts to be pleasant, others unpleasant, some to be according to our will, others against it. When it is said that such truths

<sup>28</sup> "Le principe de causalité n'est qu'une application du principe de raison suffisante." (*Ontologie*, par A. H. Dupont, p. 366.)



as the spirituality, the immortality, the substantiality of the soul are matters not of direct consciousness, but of inference therefrom, there can be no intention to place every piece of information about the thinking principle in the position of an inference: at least some characters are immediately revealed. Notably our own causal activity is a fact of which we are directly aware; and if we single out the act of free choice especially, it is not that we wish to exclude all other acts from the list of these which give immediate testimony to our causality; but we fix upon the most prominent of our own free acts as pre-eminently establishing the point in question. Nor do we think it any objection to the immediacy of the testimony, that it needs some reflective thought explicitly to recognize what causality is, how it differs from mere sequence, what it is to be the principle whence causality flows; and so forth. Even the three primary principles about Being and Not-Being need reflexion explicitly to formulate them, and, as we were made painfully to perceive in the chapter on Being, the primitive notions can be described only by the employment of great care. Under fair allowances for immediacy we have some immediate knowledge of causal activity as a fact in the concrete.

(c) Having found at least one case of efficient causality in created agents, we have now to prove it for other cases. Anticipating results, we may divide man's experienced proof of efficient causality into a succession of certainties, all deserving their name, but varying in rank. (i.) His highest certainty is

about the activity of his own intellect and will. Coleridgians insist mainly on the latter, and say that only by the consciousness of an originaive will within us can we be secure against Hume. (ii.) Man's certainty next in degree, is that he exercises *some* causality in movements of his own body—in *some* if not in others; and this truth holds in spite of Reid's assertion,<sup>27</sup> "For anything I know to the contrary, some other Being may move my hand as often as I will to move it." (iii.) Man is sure that other bodies act on his, and also (iv.) that they act *inter se*, one on another, though knowledge of the fact depends on their action upon his own body.

All our task will be accomplished if we can give valid reason for holding that material substances are real agents. We may begin with a difficulty that applies equally to acts of our own will, though we did not mention it when speaking on that subject: for its plausibility is greater with regard to the agency of external bodies, about which we are now to treat. Suarez, in defence of his peculiar theory that action is modally distinct from its own intrinsic term, or that the product of the action has the action itself for its really distinct mode, allows that God might absolutely bring about these acts without the concurrence of the faculties in which they inhere.<sup>28</sup> "God might Himself alone produce these acts, so far as they are certain qualities, without the active concurrence of the faculties, whether He produced them as forms inherent in the faculties, or not; for this latter point is quite

<sup>27</sup> *Works*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Metaphys. Disp.* xlviii. Lect. ii. § 12.

another inquiry. Hence it is not of their essence that these qualities should depend on the faculties." Having allowed that this opinion has the support of so respectable an authority as Suarez, we deny its force against the doctrine we here maintain. For to pass over what we have already shown, that whatever *might have been*, yet *de facto* consciousness testifies the origin of our thoughts and volitions to be from our own causal agency, and testifies against the mere infusion of them into our passive soul; we single out especially the effects that take place in material bodies, and observe that at best the theory of Suarez would go to show that *by miracle* God *might* work the results which we call natural. Now we do not dispute that God *might*, by His sole power supply much of the causal influence which brings about physical changes in matter; but that He commonly *does* so is a supposition derogatory to the Divine attributes. We are at least half-way on to pantheism if we make all material action Divine; furthermore, as we know things only by their activities, there is no reason why we should assert those inert masses if we suppose them to be nothing but idle occasions of the Divine operations. As Berkeley says, "Nobody will miss them," so let them go. Leibnitz and many others declare that the very notion of a Being with no activity native to it is a contradiction, and that there can be no *actus primus* without an *actus secundus*. At any rate God's works have a perfection of their own which marks them as worthy of their Maker; hence the maxims:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> St. Thomas, *Contra Gent.* Lib. III. c. lxix.

*Natura non deficit in necessariis*—"Nature fails in no requisite;" and *οὐδὲν μάτην*—"Nothing is without a purpose," as matter would be, if it were so absolutely inert as to be in a condition of simple do-nothingness. It may be said that these maxims are theological. This is not exclusively true, for they have a foundation on the generalizations of experience; but they are also theological, and under this aspect they just meet present exigences. For the occasionalists against whom we are contending appealed precisely to God in their theory that the efficiency, which we want to prove to be in nature, was not from nature, but from its Author: and it is on considerations which concern the requirements of Divine wisdom that we frame our reply.

We give the argument from St. Thomas: "If effects are not produced by the activity of creatures, then they cannot manifest to us the powers of creatures; for it is only by means of the activity which, coming forth from the cause, finds lodgment in the effect, that the effect can show us what the power of the cause is. Now the nature of an agent is known from its effects, only so far as its power is thereby known; the power being in accordance with the nature. If, therefore, creatures exert no activities that produce effects, it follows that never could the nature of a creature be known by its effects: thus we lose all natural science, which proceeds chiefly by the method of demonstrating causes from their effects."<sup>80</sup>

The proof admits of a further development on

<sup>80</sup> *Contra Gent. Lib. III. c. lxix.*

these lines: it is a matter of our inmost conscious experience that our own bodies act: therefore matter has certain inherent activities; therefore it is reasonable to assert the activity also of lifeless matter. If in the living body matter is not the mere passive recipient of the soul's causality, but has a causality due to itself, then the theory that matter is essentially inert, in the sense of wholly inactive, falls to the ground.

Here then we end our argument for the broad fact of natural causality: but we must repeat that it is only the broad fact for which we have been contending, not for the mode of operation. Mr. S. Hodgson must be trusting most deceptive guides when he affirms, in the teeth of plain facts, that "the schoolmen assumed the general conception of causal energy as equivalent to a knowledge of what causal energy consists in;" and that Hume made a strong point against them when he showed we have no knowledge of what is the nature of force. The schoolmen were well aware of the distinction between the *that* and the *how*, and did not stake the fate of the first inquiry on the success of the second. Rather it was those who were bent on penetrating the *how* who fell away from the common-sense view. To account for his defection, Malebranche says:<sup>31</sup> "The chief reason is the inconceivability of the thing: try as I may, I cannot find a representation in my mind of what this power is which is commonly attributed to creatures." Humé also insists much on the same inconceiva-

<sup>31</sup> *Recherche de la Vérité*. Explications au Liv. VI. Pt. II. c. iii.

bility to justify his scepticism. The difficulty is admitted, but fortunately it need not be encountered, else we should be in a hopeless state, for it has puzzled the most penetrating genius. Laplace declared that "the nature of force is and ever will be a mystery." But he did not on that account deny force, or renounce all knowledge of its nature: he held that we can determine "its actions and its effects." The *mystery* of essence and the *mystery* of the *substratum*, were the stalking-horses behind which adversaries attacked essence and substance; and under the same shelter of *mystery* they attack causality. We allow a mystery, but likewise contend for something plain to the ordinary intelligence. We are not to be driven from this plain truth by the cry of mystery. Hence we are struck more by the incompetence than by the argumentative skill of a man who will tell us, like Mill,<sup>32</sup> "that' the notion of causation is deemed by the school of Metaphysics most in vogue at the present moment, to imply a *mysterious* and most powerful tie, such as cannot, or at least, does not exist, between any physical fact and that other physical fact on which it is invariably consequent, and which is properly termed its cause; and that thence is deduced the supposed necessity of ascending higher into the essences and inherent constitution of things, to find the true cause, the cause which is not only followed by, but actually produces the effect." Unmistakeably in our intellectual ascent we can go as high as "the cause which certainly produces the effect:" but we

<sup>32</sup> *Logic*, Bk. III. c. v. § 2.

do not pretend to have risen to that upper region of the *mysterious*; we content ourselves with what we can claim to be securely sure of, namely, real efficiency. Kant is another opponent of the reality of our notion about causality; but as this is not the place to open out the whole question of his *a priori* categories, we must content ourselves with the assertion that what he regards as a mental form, we have proved to be the idea of a reality. We have shown that there are real causes effecting real changes among things in themselves. Even Kant has confessed as much. For, greatly to the discontentment of his friends, he argued that we know the existence of *noumena*, or of things in themselves, *because they are the efficient causes of impressions upon our organs*. No special pleading has been able to conceal this inconsistency in Kant's theory. Whereas he ought to have regarded the category of causality as not valid beyond subjective phenomena, he has unguardedly applied it to things in themselves, as though they were knowable as real causes. He was right in so arguing, but the argument implies the renunciation of his theory about the categories. And as we are on the subject of differences of meaning in the use of terms, it may prevent useless cavils if we add, that in defending the reality of created force, spiritual and material, we take the word on our own interpretation of it, not in any or all of the interpretations which various authors have given. Hence many an adversary will be saved a deal of misdirected efforts, if he puts aside his own notion of what force ought to mean, and investi-

gates whether our sense is not vindicated by our arguments.

(4) While we do not pretend to clear up many of the obscurities which beset the question of causality, at least we may give explanations of some current phrases, and so dispel certain mists that unnecessarily are allowed to confuse the view.

(a) "The effect is like its cause." How, then, have the same philosophers who adopt this principle, divided causes into *univocal* and *equivocal*, the univocal being those in which like produces like, as when living things produce their offspring, and the equivocal being the opposite to univocal? The whole account seems preposterous, and has proved a scandal to more than one weak brother in the philosophic fraternity. If an artist carves the figure of some animal whose name is a reproach when applied to man, are we justified in quoting to him the maxim, "The effect must be like its cause"? All the difficulty arises from taking cause and effect in the rough, instead of in their proper analysis. What we ought to look to is the precise causality—that and nothing more—which the artist has exercised. We find that he did not produce his own materials, nor did he expend upon them every variety of his causal powers, still less his whole self; yet he did exert upon them a certain causality, or rather a countless succession of causalities, which are identified with his total effect upon the materials, and therefore it would be strange indeed if this causality were not like the effect. Though the causality may not always be such as to indicate



the full nature of the agent, it must always be in conformity to that nature: no agent can effect anything quite out of character with himself or itself. This is the substantial meaning of the principle we are explaining, and the meaning evidently conveys a truth in flat contradiction to Hume's error. He said that for aught we can determine *a priori*, anything may produce anything, and events may succeed quite at random.<sup>33</sup> "As all objects which are not contrary are susceptible of a contrary conjunction, and as no real objects are contrary [the only contraries with Hume being *existence* and *non-existence*], I have inferred from these principles, that to consider the matter *a priori*, anything may produce anything, and that we shall never discover the reason why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however great or however little the resemblance may be betwixt them. This evidently destroys the reasoning concerning the cause of thought or perception. For though there appears no manner of connexion betwixt motion and thought, the case is the same with all other causes and effects." A man to whom causality is mere succession of ideas without reasonable objectivity and without any efficiency, may easily acquiesce in the conclusion that anything may be the cause of, that is, be constantly followed by, anything. Still, if Hume can show that there are "no real opposites," he will have gained a decided point in his favour: and, moreover, he may seem to be able to claim some support from us,

<sup>33</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. IV. sect. v.

who have laid down such doctrines as that evil is not a thing, that impossibility is nonentity, and that all Being is true. Now, if these teachings are correct, and especially if Being is essentially true, the proposition that truth cannot contradict truth may be turned into Being cannot contradict Being. The inference is that there are no real opposites, and that the only opposition is, as Hume says, between existence and non-existence: hence no real opposition between any cause and any effect, and so far at least "anything may produce anything." In reply, let us recall what our doctrine has been. We have taught not that nothing evil is real, but that the evil *qua* evil, might be reduced to the idea of a privation. An illustration used was that a cancer is a real evil to man's body, but that yet the cancerous growth in itself, as an existence, is not evil; its progress is all very well for the cancer. The evil springs from the relationship; man and cancer have not got sufficient powers to enter upon terms of mutual accommodation, and the good fortune of the cancer results in deprivation to man. Two finite perfections may be such as to be essentially opposed, and mutually exclusive; but the opposition comes of the finiteness of one or other, or both, not of their perfection as such. Similarly, our explanation of impossible combinations between finite Beings, each of which was true in itself, left ample room for contradiction, and positive contradiction, in falsely asserted conjunctions. When then we, against Hume, maintain that between certain causes and certain effects, the opposition may be such as

to warrant the argument *a priori* that certain causes cannot have certain effects, we speak of an opposition between realities. Such opposition we may call real, however true it may be that opposition implies contradiction, and a contradiction is a non-entity, or the intrinsic impossibility of actualization. So far as no cause can give what it has not got, by producing something wholly opposed to its nature, which furnishes the law of its activity, we are right in the statement that effects must resemble their causes to the extent in which these causes are productive of the effects; but we must be careful to note, if we can, what precisely is this extent.

To sum up results: nothing gives what it has not got: nothing can act in a way quite unlike its own nature: therefore every activity must have a certain likeness to the agent. Now the effect, so far as it is the effect of this particular agent, is only that agent's activity as received into some subject: in this sense, and not in some mysterious sense which no one can exactly make out, every effect is like its cause. The likeness must be recognized simply in the way we have pointed out, not by trying to make a drawing of it, in any other manner that is unavailing. The case is analogous to the likeness of knowledge to its object; consider what true knowledge must mean, and then observe that likeness expresses the relation; do not try to paint the likeness.

(b) "The cause is prior to its effect"—*Prius est esse quam agere*. To the bucolic intelligence the statement would seem obvious, and the agricultural

labourer would quote in proof of it his spades, hoes, scythes, and ploughs, which have to be made before they can be used. The whole substantial thing exists at least before many of its acts; still it has other acts not usually taken into account, which in point of time are as early as the substance. As far as we can see, a newly created piece of matter would be created gravitating; and, indeed, if we look at action, not as the production of new "forms," but as attraction and repulsion, it seems questionable whether the elements ever do anything else than act with one equal intensity from beginning to end, all difference in effects being due to differences in the balance of opposing forces, and in their respective distances. We are told that a weight on a table, though it does no *work*, gravitates all the time, and must have its downward tendency checked by an antagonist pressure upwards. We are almost quite in the dark as to the mode of action; but it is a wholesome reminder to be told not to be too free in speaking of causes issuing from potency into act, or of an effect being *in fieri* and *in facto esse*, in process of production and a product. What is taken as the first issuing forth of activity may be only the first release of that activity into open manifestation, and what is taken as the process of one effect is often the succession of many different effects. Here once more the case is presented in which we must be on our guard against taking a series of causations for one simple causation. If the fire is considered as the cause, and the condition of being cooked as the effect, then it

looks as though the effect on a round of beef was a long time in coming—quite an illustration of the difference between *in fieri* and *in facto esse*. But if we examine the process more accurately, each factor of the causation is found to be synchronous with each factor of the effect. Hence the maxim, *Causa in actu et effectus in actu sunt simul*. It is not, then, in the *order of time*, but in the *order of nature* that the cause, acting *qua cause*, must be prior to its effect. Not that with Lewes we may make the effect the mere sum-total of the *causal agents*: for besides the *agents* there must be their *agencies*, real issuings forth of activity, and it is the sum-total of these that may be identified with the effect. The cook who makes a pie *efficienter*, as efficient cause, does not make it *constitutive*, as constituent cause, or we should often be cannibals at dinner. The cook is not identified with the cooked materials or with any part of them, but the cook's agency—which is only a portion of the whole agency required—is identified with her effect upon the materials. She really does produce an effect, and “in the order of nature” the *producer* is always prior to the *producing*, though in time producer and its production may occasionally have a simultaneous origin. Herein our doctrine differs from that of Lewes, who says,<sup>34</sup> “Cause means *unconditional antecedence*. The metaphysical conception of a cause, the *producer* of an effect, needs limitation. We can know nothing of the final nexus. When we say heat produces expansion, we

<sup>34</sup> *Aristotle*, c. iv. pp. 90, 91.

simply express the *observed facts* that one heated body brought near a colder body begins to contract, and the other simultaneously begins to expand; nothing new has been *produced*, a mutual change in the condition of the two bodies has resulted in the *transference* of so much motion (heat, expansion) from one body to another." To effect even a transference is some sort of real production; but what we should give special attention to is, that on Lewes's showing, "invariable *antecedence*" is declared not to be antecedence; or causality is reduced to antecedence, on the understanding that the antecedence need not be antecedent. For if cause and effect are simultaneous, one is not before the other; there is no precedence where the conditioned is simply the sum of the conditions. Hence Lewes himself adds, "Rigorously speaking, we must limit even the expression of *necessary sequence*, which is held to express all that is known of causation. There is no *following* of effects from causes; but, as Sir John Herschel more truly says, the causes and the effects are *simultaneous*. . . . We say that the earth's attraction *causes* the weight of the apple; but the weight *is* the attraction, they are two aspects of one unknown reality." This is awkward in the mouth of Lewes; but we can easily accommodate ourselves to circumstances. We say that inasmuch as action is productively exercised by a substance which is the *causal agent*, the *cause* is prior, at least "in the order of nature," to the effect; but the *causality* is contemporaneous with *its* effect—not necessarily with the whole result which is roughly denominated

effect—for the two are the same thing under different aspects. Thus we at any rate are free from certain grave difficulties which beset the empiricist, for whom causality ought always to mean antecedence in time.

(c) "The same cause, under the same circumstances, always has the same effect." An ambiguity here lies in the word "circumstances." As before, we found "attribute" taking the place of its opposite, "essence" or "substance," so that we got "essential" or "substantial attributes," and as we found "accidents" having their own inferior kind of "essences," so that we could speak of the essence of some accidental property being so and so; similarly now, "circumstance" comes to usurp the whole field to itself. At last we ask in bewilderment, "Where is that *round which something else stands?*" Now, if we take man's free choice as this central point, then it forms an exception to the rule, "The same cause, under the same circumstances, always has the same effect," provided we further understand cause as "agent," and not as "agency," as that which acts, and not as one definite mode of its activity. But apart from liberty of choice in all other causes the rule holds both of agent and of agency. It is true that exposure to what we may suppose the same climate is said to give different men different diseases, and other men no disease at all; but even if we allowed the exposure to be exactly the same for all, yet the men exposed differ vastly one from another. Hence if generically "man" and "climate" are the constants,

in the concrete we have not the same "circumstances." In what is called the "plurality of causes"—or the doctrine that one effect may be due to a variety of causes, we must distinguish two things—its bearing on practical science and its bearing on philosophic analysis of what precisely causality is. On practical science the result may often be very prohibitive, because, *at least so far as we can detect*, a given effect may be due to any one of a multitude of causes. The obstacle is real, though its reality may be exaggerated.<sup>35</sup> Next, in abstract philosophy, the case is still a difficulty. An angel, a human arm, or an explosive mixture may each give the same rate of velocity to a missile: if we identify the causality with the effect, so far it looks as though in each cause the causality was the same, though certainly the three causes were very different. The more we go into the details, into the several modes of producing motion, into the difference between agent as acting, action, and effect, the more we find opportunity for raising questions. And yet, after all, we may defend our original statement as true. For whatever may be the correct doctrine about the "plurality of causes,"<sup>36</sup> that is a matter which affects only the

<sup>35</sup> Mr. Balfour's *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, c. iv. pp. 56, 57. Newton made it his second "rule of philosophizing," *effectuum naturalium ejusdem generis eadem sunt causæ*.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. Bain says, "It seems to me, if I may venture an opinion, that for the present the vicariousness of causes must be practically recognized, at least in the more complex sciences; but that the particularity of causes, if I may use the expression, is really true." (*Logic*, Vol. II. pp. 16, seq., pp. 76, seq.)



tracing back of *special* results to *special* causes; it is an empirical process, an investigation *a posteriori*. Whereas our proposition is *general*, its procedure is in the reverse direction, from causes to effects; its truth is *a priori*. We affirm that given a necessary cause which has fixed laws of action, then if that cause exerts itself under conditions that are just alike, its own precise effect will be just alike. Otherwise we should have indeterminism in Physics, and contradiction in Metaphysics. It is raising quite an irrelevant issue to remark, that never, in the whole history of the cosmos, are exactly the like circumstances repeated; they approximate near enough to identity for all practical purposes.

(d) "On the cessation of the cause the effect sometimes ceases, sometimes not." When Keats desired to have as his epitaph, "Here lies one whose name is writ in water," he evidently distinguished the effect which perishes at once from that which endures. What is it that makes the difference? In the world of mind, according to some, there are no passing effects, but all are permanently stored up in memory; such at least is a theory which Hamilton adopts.<sup>37</sup> But if we take the world of matter, then probably our best guides are the laws of motion, according to which no effect ceases, except when it meets with some counteracting cause whereby it suffers transmutation. By the force

<sup>37</sup> *Metaphysics*, Lect. xxxiii. p. 211. Lotze suggests a somewhat opposite theory, which gives the soul an internal power to repress the various motions stored up within it. (*Metaphysics*, Bk. III. c. ii. § 26.)

of gravitation waters just divided close up again; the wind obliterates traces on the sand; the London atmosphere eats away carvings on stone; and the whole question of endurance appears as one of the absence of opposing forces. We are not justified in saying positively that local movement is the only effect producible by matter; even in those sciences which are mathematically reducible to modes of motion, these modes need not be the whole effect; still the laws of motion seem to give us the best criterion we can find for judging about the nature of permanency in material effects. A German philosopher, Herbart, has largely used the analogy of impact between material particles to illustrate the process by which ideas are checked by ideas; but it is only an analogy and is over-worked.

On the whole we must admit that the saying, "On the cessation of the cause, the effect ceases," is only as a piece of popular philosophy, and that it needs to be explained, and even explained away.

The axioms about causality so far discussed are typical instances; and what we have laid down in their regard will serve for the elucidation of others, such as that the "effect cannot excel its cause." Throughout, the principles on which we must fall back are especially two given by St. Thomas, that between the agent and the patient there must be some sort of difference, and that yet action and passion are one thing under different relations. "The thing under the same aspect cannot be both in act and in potency:" "When something effects

an alteration in itself, it is not agent and patient, mover and moved under the same aspect ;”<sup>38</sup> “Action and passion are the same entity, and differ only according to their different relations.”<sup>39</sup> So teaches St. Thomas, though because of other passages,<sup>40</sup> his meaning is not undisputed. In the utterance last quoted, which contains a principle to which we have often recurred, he is but repeating doctrine to be found in Aristotle, who said<sup>41</sup> that “action and passion and motion are the same thing” — *πρῶτον μὲν ὡς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὄντος τοῦ πάσχειν καὶ τοῦ κινεῖσθαι καὶ τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν λέγωμεν.* Mr. Wallace<sup>42</sup> thus translates the whole passage : “Let us in the first place agree to regard in our discussion the words *passive impression*, *movement*, and *activity* as identical: for movement is a species of realized activity, though it is imperfect. Now in every instance things are impressed and set in movement by something which is capable of producing an impression, and which exists in full activity. And thus an impression is in one sense made by the like, in another sense by the unlike; for it is as unlike that anything suffers an impression; after the impression has been made, it is converted into like.” In this sense it is said that while the effect must be like its cause, the agent, as such, must be unlike the patient, as such; and yet the agent must have a nature conformable or like to its own activities.

<sup>38</sup> In *Metaphysics*, Lib. IX. c. i. Lect. i. <sup>39</sup> *Sum.* i. q. xlix. a. ii. ad 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Contra Gent.* Lib. II. c. ix.; *De Potentia*, q. vii. a. ix. ad 7.

<sup>41</sup> *De Anima*, Lib. V. c. iii. <sup>42</sup> Aristotle's *Psychology*, p. 87.

(e) "A cause is more than a condition." This saying is of a different type from those previously explained, and leads some people to a hazy and erroneous idea, that a condition may positively do something, without being a cause. We must try to distinguish different senses.

The most pure instance of a condition is one which does nothing, but consists in the mere absence of an obstacle. Thus a window is a condition of seeing, because it does not impede the course of light; it may be a simple hole, as in more primitive buildings, or it may be glass, inasmuch as it has the negative quality of not appreciably obstructing the luminiferous waves. But the best glass gives no light of its own, as we may verify for ourselves at night, when the candles are out.

The second case of a "condition," is one where the reality does something positive, but, as a cause, it is so comparatively inferior in rank, or so far removed from the final result as not to be reckoned among the causes. This is instanced by the oft-quoted relation of the bellows-blower to the organist. The former has positively to cause something, but his work is unskilled labour, and he is not the immediate producer of the musical sound. If we were so inclined we might also call the organist a condition; for he only opens the vents and lets the imprisoned air act on the tubes; but because it requires much skill to press the keys in the ways required, the actions are dignified with the title of principal causes. The *remoteness* of the organ-builders, or of the musical composer from

the actual playing at the time, would lower them to "conditions," though in point of *dignity* they might claim to be *causes*.

A third meaning of "condition" refers to a moral agent, who is not simply made to act upon the fulfilment of certain "conditions," but chooses to act where these motives are presented. Thus, the grace of God is sometimes "conditioned" by certain acts on the part of man, though there is no obligation, not even one consequent on a promise given. If not the free acts only, at least the free acts especially, of a moral agent deserve to be styled acts dependent on conditions.

We conclude that in reference to a moral agent, so far as his action is distinctively moral, a condition furnishes a requirement without which he will not act: while in reference to physical agency as such, a condition is either a remote or a comparatively insignificant cause, or else it is the absence of a possible obstacle.

An *occasion* is a conjunction of causes, efficient and material. Those who speak of the evolution of our solar systems from a primitive nebula, have noticed that not only the primitive elements of matter in such a nebula need to be accounted for, but that likewise their *collocation*, their arrangement, their distribution, is a distinct fact about them, of which some account should be rendered. Now an occasion answers to this collocation: it always must have a distinct cause, but in itself we regard it as an incident of causation, not as a cause. If *on the occasion* when a flower is ready

to scatter its seeds a high wind arises, they are dispersed all the further; if *on the occasion* when a tile falls from a roof a man is passing just under the spot where it falls, he is injured. Our ordinary practice is, to take the conjunction of two or more causes which we regard as practically independent, to ignore the cause or causes which have brought them into conjunction, and then, to speak of their combination as *occasional*. In the example of a free agent, he may choose his occasions because of their special fitness to his purpose, and they may become *conditions* of his action.

We forbear further illustration of the maxims of causality. We fail indeed to explain some of the points which they suggest because our knowledge of the mode of causality is very limited; nevertheless, we are able to sustain our main proposition, which is, that we can make sure of real causes in the created universe.

#### NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(I) The promised account of the three doctrines about causality which are to be found in Hume, must now be given.

(i.) In proof of the first of the three assertions, that often Hume only argues that our knowledge of causes is *a posteriori*, not *a priori*, it is enough to refer to the *Essays*, sect. vii. Part I. Here it will be seen that he is working out his principle, that "when we know a power we know the very circumstance in the cause by which it is enabled to produce the effect; so that from such knowledge we should be able to predict, apart

from experience, all that the power is able to effect." His arguments tend not to disprove real causality, but merely to show that while we are made aware of much real activity, yet we never penetrate into the secrets of its nature. For lack of the perfect knowledge of power in its inmost character, he renounces his claim even to the imperfect knowledge, which, nevertheless, he perpetually supposes. He says, for example, of our inner experiences, that "if by consciousness we perceived *any power* or energy, we must know this power; we must know the secret union of soul and body, and the nature of both these substances." The assumption is more than a trifle extravagant, that unless a man knows all about power he knows no power at all. It is the old story of the "hidden essence" and the "hidden substratum," which we considered when treating of essence and substance; nothing is known because something is hidden.

(ii.) Our second statement about Hume, that the "impression" of force or power is given by no single experience, but only by repeated experiences, is proved by citation from Part II. of the same Essay, which may be copied out with little comment; it contains the pith of his whole theory, and should be carefully read: "We have sought in vain for any idea of power, or necessary connexion, in all the sources from which we could suppose it to be derived. It appears that in *single instances* of the operation of bodies, we never can, by our utmost scrutiny, discover anything but one event following another; without being able to comprehend any force or power, by which the cause operates; or any connexion between it and its supposed effect. The same difficulty occurs in contemplating [singly] the operations of mind on body, where we observe the motion of the latter to follow on the

volition of the former, but are not able to observe nor conceive the tie which binds together the motion and the volition. The authority of the will over its own faculties and ideas is not one whit more comprehensible." After examining the operations of outer body upon outer body, of will upon our own body, and of will upon the mind's own actions, he pronounces that, "on the whole, there appears not any one *instance of connexion* which is conceivable by us." So he repeats the old blunder of confounding together the knowledge of a fact, and the knowledge of its inmost nature; because he cannot conceive the *how* (διότι) of the connexion, he cannot affirm the *that* (ὅτι)—that there is a connexion. Hence he continues, "All events seem entirely loose and separate; one event follows upon another, but we never can observe any tie between them." Then he draws his conclusion, that from *single experiences* there is no "impression of power," and consequently no "idea." What he fails to find in single instances, he next proceeds to seek and find in the *repetition of many similar instances*. From neglect of this part of the theory, some report Hume as wholly denying that we have the impression of power from any source. Whereas his words are clear: "There is nothing in a *number* of instances different from every *single* instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar, except only that after the repetition of similar instances the mind is *carried by habit*, upon appearance of one event, to *expect its usual attendant*, and to believe that it will exist. This connexion, therefore, which we *feel in the mind*, or *customary transition of the imagination* from one object to its usual attendant, is the *sentiment or impression* from which we form the *idea* of power or necessary connexion."

(iii.) The third point that remains to be shown is the manner in which Hume arrives at no objective



knowledge of causality, strictly so called, but only at invariable sequence, and that in the subjective order of feelings. The passages in support of this interpretation are embarrassingly numerous. Let us begin with the following:<sup>1</sup> "*Reason* can never show us the connexion of one object with another, though aided by experience and observations of their constant conjunction in all past instances." Therefore, whatever be the way in which Hume arrives at causal connexion, it is not by the way of reason; and that is an important declaration, though afterwards what it says is unsaid. "When the mind passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is *not determined by reason*, but by certain principles *which associate together the ideas of these objects*, and unite them in the imagination. *Had ideas no more union in the fancy than objects have in the understanding*, we could never draw any inferences from causes to effects, nor repose belief in any matter of fact. *The inference, therefore, depends solely on the union of ideas.*" In strict logic, he assures us, each new revision of our judgments should go on diminishing their probability, which was all they had to start with, till at last every vestige of probability is lost. Logically this should be; but nature is too strong for Logic, and the only good we get out of considering what Logic has to object against our way of procedure is, that it "makes the reader more sensible that all our *reasonings* concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but *custom*; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cogitative part of our nature." For the result of reflexion being such that it gradually "reduces the original evidence to nothing," the inference is that<sup>2</sup> "if belief were only a simple act of thought, without

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. II. sect. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Pt. IV. sect. i.

any peculiar manner of conception or addition of force and vivacity, it must infallibly destroy itself." Nevertheless, since each one, "though he can find no error in the foregoing arguments, yet continues to believe as usual, he may safely conclude that *reasoning*<sup>3</sup> and belief is *some sensation* or *peculiar manner of conception*, which 'tis impossible for mere ideas and reflexions to destroy." Thus the reason which Hume sets over against mere modes of sensation or feeling, in the end is reduced to a mode of feeling; and the principle of causality, which reason cannot prove, is declared to be reasonable, because reason after all is not reason, but a kind of sentiment which is natural to us, and which it is useless logically to dispute, though logical disputation, if employed, is fatal to its claims. We know causality by a process which both is not reasonable and is reasonable: it is not reasonable, because reason is logical, and Logic pronounces against causality; it is reasonable, because reason is a kind of feeling, and we have a "feeling" of causality. If these exhibitions of fatuity should do anything towards making apparent the chaos of confusion into which Hume precipitates himself, the effect on the appreciation of much modern philosophy will be highly useful; for this last is not radically better than that of Hume which it aims at slightly improving.

It is well that we should thus be brought across Hume's wavering tendency between making knowledge a matter of "natural propensity," and distinguishing "natural propensity" from knowledge. He says,<sup>4</sup> "After the most accurate of all my reasonings, I can give no *reason* why I should assent to it; and feel nothing but a *strong propensity* to consider objects strongly under that view under which they appear to

<sup>3</sup> Note this word.

<sup>4</sup> *Treatise*, Pt. IV. sect. vii.

me." And his final decision, given almost at the end of the First Book, takes this shape: "Where reason is *lively* and mixes itself up with some *propensity* it ought to be assented to; where it does not, it can never have any title to operate upon us." If some should think that this is only a clumsy expression of the truth, that ultimately we must believe because of felt conviction, they have only to consider the application to our present subject of causality, and they will see how Hume makes it the very triumph of his system, that it holds equally for the animals below man and for man himself. Once more our vouchers shall be Hume's own words. He has to explain the *necessity* of connexion, which forms part of our notion of causation; and here is his explanation:<sup>5</sup> "The idea of *necessity* must be derived from some internal impression. There is no internal impression which has relation to the present business, *but that propensity which custom produces* to pass from one object to the idea of its usual attendant. This, therefore, is the essence of necessity. *Upon the whole, necessity is something which exists in the mind, not in objects*;"<sup>6</sup> nor is it possible for us ever to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is the determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects, and from effects to causes, according to their experienced union." Then he adds<sup>7</sup> as "an invincible proof" of his system of explanation, that it applies to the knowledge both of man and beast. He is aware that this theory is of all his paradoxes<sup>8</sup> "the most violent," and very much against "the inveterate pre-

<sup>5</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. III. sect. xiv.

<sup>6</sup> Hence Mr. Huxley says, "Necessity is a shadow of the mind's own throwing."

<sup>7</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. III. sect. xvi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* sect. xiv.

judices of mankind;" yet he makes bold to maintain it notwithstanding. In regard to causality, he asks us to believe, on the one side, that as far as *reason* can see, "anything may produce anything; creation, annihilation, motion, reason, volition"—all these may arise from one another, or from any other object we can imagine, on the other side "we infer a cause immediately from its effect, and this inference is not only a *true species of reasoning*, but *more convincing than when* we interpose another term to connect the two."<sup>9</sup> Evidently Hume has two sorts of reason, and the marvel about them is, that one of them is irrational yet valid, while the other is rational yet invalid.

Of Hume's recent followers we will take only one, Mill, who felt that his leader's definition of cause was inadequate. The definition stood: "The cause is an object followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second;" or "a cause is an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought of that other." Mill saw that this clumsy formula, so far as it provided for anything, provided only for invariable sequence, and invariable sequence need not be causality; hence he added the word "unconditional," and said that causality was "invariable and unconditional sequence."<sup>10</sup> Day may have invariably followed upon night, without thereby proving itself the effect of the latter, for it is *conditioned* "on the existence of the sun or some such luminous body, and on there being no opaque medium between that body and the part of the earth where we are situated; these are the sole conditions, and the union of these, without any superfluous (?)<sup>11</sup> circumstance,

<sup>9</sup> *Treatise*, Bk. I. Pt. III. sect. xv.    <sup>10</sup> *Logic*, Bk. III. c. v. § 5.

<sup>11</sup> Does "superfluous" mean "additional"?

constitutes the cause." All the advance which Mill here makes upon Hume, is that he secures attention to a completer enumeration of the several parts of the antecedent; but having provided for this completer enumeration, he leaves causality in the category of mere invariable sequence, without any productive power. He has pointed<sup>12</sup> out with a great deal of good sense, that what we generally call "the cause," is only a part of it, and he adds that, adequately taken, "the cause is the sum-total of the conditions, positive and negative, taken together; the whole of the contingencies of every description, which being realized, the consequent invariably follows." The practical difficulty is to know where to stop in the attempt at such an exhaustive method of enumeration; for it would carry us back to the beginning of the world; and the fact that we must break off a long way short of this initial point has formed one link in the argument of some who assert that our propositions about nature, because we can never perfectly isolate one truth from its connexions, must be hypotheticalal, not categorical. In his own writings, and in the very place we are discussing, Mill exemplifies the incompleteness which he is condemning. For he is satisfied with the presence of a luminous body and the absence of an opaque medium, as constituting the conditions of day; whereas there is further need of a transmissive medium, such as the luminiferous ether. Again, so long as he assigns no exact meaning to the word "day," it is impossible to decide whether, even apart from the omission of the ether, he is right in calling a luminous body, and the absence of an opaque medium between it and the earth, rather "the cause of day," than day itself. Some people call it "day," even though a solar eclipse should

<sup>12</sup> L.c. § 3.

be going on between sunrise and sunset; and in that case one of Mill's "invariable antecedents" to the undefined consequent "day," has taken the liberty to vary. In a later chapter of the same book (c. xix. § 1), Mill gives his account of day in other words: "Day is not the cause of night: both are successive effects of a common cause, the periodical passage of the spectator into and out of the earth's shadow consequent on the earth's rotation and on the illuminating property of the sun."

But our main objection to Mill is that he denies our knowledge of efficient causality, without which his "invariable and unconditional sequence" can never be rationally deduced from any amount of experience. His improvement on the position of Hume is only one of very superficial appearances.

(2) Brown, in his *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect*, clearly ranges himself on the side of those who reduce causality to a matter of invariable sequence. In Part I. sect. i. we read, "It is the mere relation of uniform antecedence, so important and so universally believed, which appears to me to constitute *all* that can be philosophically meant in the words *power* and *causation*, to whatever objects, material or spiritual, the words may be applied. . . . A cause, therefore, in the fullest definition that it philosophically admits, may be said to be that which precedes any change, and which, existing at any time in similar circumstances, has always been, and will always be, immediately followed by a similar change. Priority in the sequence observed, and invariableness of antecedence in the past and future sequences supposed, are the elements, and the only elements, combined in the notion of a cause." In rejecting what he conceives to be a definition, which makes power something more than invariable antecedence, he

describes such power as "something mysterious, at once a part of the antecedence and yet not a part of it, an intermediate link in a chain of physical sequences, that is yet itself no part of the chain, of which it is said, notwithstanding, to be a link." Finally, in Part III. sect. v. he sets forth his view of the origin of our belief in uniform sequence or causation, which he attributes neither to perception nor to reasoning, nor to Hume's "customary association of ideas," but to a special intuition or instinct implanted by the Creator. "That with a providential view to the circumstances in which we are placed, our Divine Author has endowed us *with certain instinctive tendencies*, is as true as that He has endowed us with reason itself. We feel no astonishment in considering these when we discover the manifest advantage that arises from them; and of all the instincts with which we could be endowed there is not that which seems—I will not say so advantageous, merely—but so indispensable for the very continuance of our being, as that which points out to us the future, if I may so speak, before it has already begun to exist. It is wonderful indeed—for what is not wonderful?—that the internal revelation which this belief involves, should be given us like a voice of ceaseless and unerring prophecy. But when we consider who it was that formed man, then difficulty vanishes." This completes the positive statement of Brown's own view; but in the Fourth Part, where he proceeds to explain and reject Hume's theory, he ought to have been more struck by words so very like his own, as are these from the *Inquiry*, Part II. sect. vii.: "What stronger instance can be produced of the surprising ignorance and weakness of the understanding than the present? For surely if there be any relation among objects, which it imports us to know perfectly, 'tis that of cause and

effect." Yet observation and reasoning are declared incompetent to produce this belief: we owe it to the instinctive force of custom, in which "those who delight in the discovery and contemplation of final causes have ample subject to employ their admiration." (sect. v. in fine.)



## CHAPTER IV.

### RELATION, SPACE, AND TIME.

#### *Synopsis.*

- (1) A mean to be sought between English empiricism and the *a priori* forms of Kant.
- (2) The Relative and the Absolute.
- (3) Space.
- (4) Time.

#### *Notes and Illustrations.*

(1) WE are now about to enter upon questions on which once more differences of theory about the origin of knowledge make themselves very conspicuously felt. To the pure empiricist, Relation, Space, and Time are ideas that result from complex conditions of sensation; to the Kantian they are *a priori* forms; to us they are general ideas which have a foundation in experience, but are generalized only by the abstracting intellect.

We will begin with our English empirics. To the mind that loves concrete images, and does not see the need of any subtler inquiries, the Aristotelian treatment of Relation, Space, and Time seems singularly obscure in contrast to the plain handling of the subject by Brown, who gives us a vivid picture of an infant brandishing its little arms and kicking about its little legs in Space and Time. It

thus acquires feelings of relation ; and the feeling of the relations of co-existence give the notion of Space, while the feelings of the relations of succession give the notion of Time.<sup>1</sup>

And yet we have but to read on a little, and we shall find the plain terms of the empirical school giving place to obscurities on each of the three ideas which we want to investigate. Each becomes matter of controversy, and this fact it is well to bring out, for the benefit of those who fancy that the experience philosophy has made quite plain what centuries of scholasticism only involved in deeper and deeper obscurity. As to the first, Brown himself<sup>2</sup> draws a distinction between "feelings which arise in simple succession, without involving any notion of the *relation* of preceding feelings," and therefore are called "phenomena of simple suggestion ;" and, on the other hand, "feelings which consist in the mere perception of relation," and therefore are called "phenomena of relative suggestion." Mr. Spencer concurs in making much of these "feelings of relation," as distinct from the mere feelings which are related. John S. Mill, however, declares,<sup>3</sup> "The simplest of all cases of relation are those expressed by the word 'antecedent' and 'consequent,' and by the word 'simultaneous.' If we say, for instance, that the dawn preceded sunrise, the fact in which the two things, dawn and sunrise, were jointly concerned, consisted only of the two things themselves ; *no third thing entered into the fact or phenomena at all.*

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Lect. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* c. xlv. in initio.

<sup>3</sup> *Logic*, Bk. I. c. iii. § 10.

*Unless indeed we choose to call the succession of the two objects a third thing : but their succession is not something added to the things themselves, it is something involved in them. Our consciousness of the succession of these sensations is not a third sensation or feeling added to them : we have not first the two feelings, and then a feeling of their succession. To have two feelings at all implies having them successively or else simultaneously. Sensations, or other feelings being given, succession and simultaneousness are the two conditions, to the alternative of which they are subjected by the nature of our faculties ; and no one has been able, or needs expect, to analyze the matter any further."* The writer's doctrine of relativity would seem to compel him to use this language. His colleague, Mr. Grote, takes an intermediate or a conciliatory view.<sup>4</sup> He objects to the elder Mill for calling Space and Time abstract terms. In regard to Time, for instance, he thinks those wrong who call it "an abstract name for the pastness, the presentness, and the futureness of our successive feelings," instead of "a collective name for our feeling of their succession"—that is, for what James Mill himself calls the part of the process "which consists in being sensible to their successiveness," to express which, he declares, "we have not a name." Grote, then, continues his comment precisely on the point upon which we are examining the divergent doctrines of the empirical school—namely, upon their views as to that which it pleases them to style *the feeling of relation*. "This taking notice of the successiveness

<sup>4</sup> Note to James Mill's *Analysis*, Vol. II. p. 134.

of our feelings, *whether we prefer to call it a part of the feelings themselves, or another feeling superadded to them*, is yet something which, in the entire mass of feeling which the successive impressions give us, we are able to discriminate and to name apart from the rest. A perception of succession between two feelings is a state of consciousness *per se*, which, though we cannot think of it separately from the feelings, we can yet think of it as a completed thing in itself, and not as an attribute of either or both of the two feelings. Its name, if it had one, would be a concrete name. But the entire series of these perceptions of succession has a name—Time, which I, therefore, hold to be a concrete name.” For those who take an intelligent interest in these discussions, and who are not indulging simply the delusion that they can freely pronounce upon them, without any real work in the way of study, it cannot but be striking to observe how empiricism is not such plain sailing as to the superficial reader it appears. Even on one of the ideas which is so all-important in its system as is Relation, obscurities begin to make themselves felt, and some of the minutiae, which are popularly supposed to be mere scholastic subtleties, are equivalently acknowledged to call for an examination into their nature.

Again, the assertion that Space may be analyzed into relations of co-existent feelings, and Time into relations of successive feelings, does not satisfy some of the empirics themselves. To start with, co-existent feeling obviously need not give *spacial* co-existence ; and if it fails to give Space, it fails to

give just what was required of it. To say that one feeling is *outside* another simply in the sense of *other* or *different* from it, does not furnish the *outsideness* of Space. The idea of co-existence is by Mr. Spencer<sup>5</sup> analyzed into the idea of succession under special circumstances. His tendency to regard consciousness as made up rather of successive than of co-existent states, naturally leads him to pronounce the feeling of succession to be more primitive than the feeling of co-existence, and to derive the latter from the former. Of things exciting successive sensations we are able, on his theory, to predicate co-existence on condition that we are able to reverse the order of succession. Thus a cow and a horse co-exist, if at will we can pass without strain and with vividness from horse to cow and from cow to horse; and the same holds of the several objects that make up an outspread landscape. The objects are represented by successive sensations, but the power to vary the order of succession proves their co-existence. Lastly, not to be diffuse in these illustrations of the differences between empiric doctrines, we may mention that while he does not give up the above analysis of Space and Time as wrong, Mr. Bain does admit that there is a certain inadequacy in it, so that he is not so peremptory in his condemnation of innate ideas as some might expect. He contents himself with affirming that there is *no proved necessity* to have recourse to so unwelcome a theory, and that future labours may complete an analysis which at present is incomplete.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Psychology*, pp. 222—224.      <sup>6</sup> *Mental Science*, Bk. II. c. vi. § 4.

So much by way of specimen from the empiricists. On the other side, Kant boldly ranks Relation, Space, and Time among the *a priori* categories of the mind which no experience could give, and which no valid ground in reason warrants us in applying to things-in-themselves, as they exist outside the mind. Hegelians abolish the things-in-themselves, but do not on that account succeed in giving a real basis to these fundamental conceptions. To teach equivalently that there is no reality but thought, will not satisfy those who are bent on seeking a more genuine reality for their thoughts than the undoubted fact that thought itself is real.

Our course will be a mean. We shall rely neither upon mere accumulated, related sensations, nor upon innate forms; but we shall take such ideas as they arise out of experience, in a mind that has the consciously possessed power of seeing into what is objectively evident, and recognizing it as the real.

(2) There is almost a superstition connected with the term Relation: indeed superstition consists in asserting a relation between two objects which is out of all proportion, so that the effect assigned to a cause is quite beyond its natural powers. It is, therefore, superstitious to think that a man's destiny is settled by the star under which he is born. Mill has much right on his side when he affirms his inability "to see in what respect Relation is something more recondite than any other attribute; indeed it seems to be so in a somewhat less degree."

A relation is defined to be the way one thing holds itself in regard to another—*habitus unius ad alterum*. It therefore requires three elements, that which is related, that to which it is related, and that whereby the relation is constituted. The first is the *subject*, the second the *term*, and the third the *foundation* of the relation. All agree in making the subject and the foundation *intrinsic* to the relation: but the term to which the subject is related, is by some deemed *extrinsic*, inasmuch as it is that to which the relation is directed, not the relation itself. At least in all created things a relationship can be reversed, the *term* becoming subject and the subject becoming *term*; in which process we must observe whether the same denomination applies to both members, as when A is brother to B, and B is brother to A, or whether the denomination is different, as when A is father to B, and B is son to A: as also whether both members are existent, or one existent and the other merely ideal.

The conditions of a real relation are easily assignable; there must be a real distinction between the *subject* and the *term*—at least such distinction as holds between a whole and its part—and the *foundation* must be real. There is, however, an ambiguity about the foundation; sometimes it is considered *inadequately* as it affects the subject only, at other times it is considered *adequately* as it affects the term also. In the real relation of teacher to taught the adequate foundation is all that passes mutually between master and pupil in their respective characters as such. Thus we are thrown

back on a remark like that which we had to make in reference to causation ; what we roughly speak of as simply "the cause" often includes a multiplicity of causes, and what we roughly speak of as simply "the relation" often includes a multiplicity of relations. A sculptor's relation to the statue which he produces entails every single stroke of his chisel, and more besides. Indeed, whenever we have a difficulty about a relationship, the obstacle is not from the special nature of relation as such, but from obscurity as to the facts involved in a particular case.

Real as a relation may be, it is often true that, as the formation of it is a past event, it is only by its preservation in the memory that it can be known. We cannot read in a man's outward frame that another has been in past time a benefactor to him. Still the relation is real, not merely mental. A mental relation is one which is not constituted except by an act of the mind distinguishing in objects what is not really distinct. Thus, according to our view, the relation between the individuality in a living man and his specific nature, as that nature exists in the concrete, is mental, for there is no real distinction between the two. Also, it is said that the relation between object known and person knowing, though real on the side of the latter, is not so on the side of the former, because this is in no way altered by the fact. A man is neither fatter or leaner simply for being known. Nevertheless, inasmuch as a material object acts on the senses to produce a knowledge of itself,



it establishes a real causal relation on its own part. Also the relation of similitude between any idea and its object, though it comes under the definition of mental relation so far as it is "constituted by the mind," yet is not described by these words in their intended signification; it is rather a real relation, for the idea is real: its object is real and really other than the idea, and the foundation is real. Besides *real* and *mental* relations, philosophers also enumerate on another principle of division *transcendental* and *predicamental*. The former are so called because they are found in all things without exception; everything by its own nature, without additional modification, bears some relationship. This is true even of God, as we see in the revealed doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. It is true that the schoolmen are not uniform in their account of the "transcendental" relation; but the simplest way is to take it as we have said, for a relation which is *essential* to a thing because it is what it is. Thereby the contrast is brought out, for the opposite to transcendental is the *predicamental* relation, an *accident* which may come and go, and which derives its name from the fact that it is the *πρός τι* of the Aristotelian *predicamenta*. Such a relation is one that may or may not be present, that is not simply essential to its subject, but superinduced upon it, not necessary to it, but contingent, as to be President of the United States, whatever be a man's inborn ability for that office.

Next we may inquire whether anything can be purely a relation and not also something absolute.

Some of the schoolmen go near to affirming a purely relative thing when they assert that a real relation is a sort of diminutive entity, intermediate between the terms related, and really distinct from each and from the foundation of the relationship. It seems better to submit this doctrine to the edge of Ockam's razor, *Entities are not to be multiplied unnecessarily*. But we may go further, and say that all relation is founded on the absolute, and no purely relative Being can exist. Absolute, however, has a variety of meanings which need some discrimination. It may mean the independent, that which in reference to any other is *absolved* or free from all tie or obligation both physical and moral: and so it would apply pre-eminently to God. It may mean also that which is complete in its own nature, which is finished and perfect: God again is thus absolute inasmuch as He is infinite perfection. But as opposed simply to the relative, the absolute is that which is *taken in itself and on its own account*. Everything in the order of logical if not of chronological priority, first of all *is*, and then is *in reference to something else*: it has thus its absolute and its relative aspect, and the one cannot be without the other. Of course before a real relationship is complete there must be some real other to complete it; and this is all the truth that is to be found in Locke's words,<sup>7</sup> "Relation is not contained in the real existence of things, but is something extraneous and super-induced." Every absolute thing has its foundation on account of which it is apt to enter into a trans-

<sup>7</sup> Bk. II. c. xv. n. 8.

cendental relation, without any change in itself, as soon as the other term is posited ; also by means of of various activities and passivities a variety of other relationships can be contracted. But in every case there is no reality beyond the absolute agents and the absolute activities and passivities, though these at the same time that they are absolute are also relative. There is no contradiction here, for it is under different aspects that they are at once absolute and relative. They exist each of them in their own nature, but they exist each in connexion with other natures. So much is admitted even by so stout a defender of the relativity of all knowledge as Mr. Spencer, with the exception that he allows us only an "obscure consciousness," not strictly a "knowledge" of the absolute element. "The existence of the non-relative," he says, "is unavoidably asserted in every chain of reasoning by which relativity is proved."<sup>8</sup>

Here is an appropriate place to declare our objection to the Hegelian doctrine that the mind is the only relating faculty, while all objects of sense are isolated and without order. We object also to the excess of relativity in writers like Mr. Bain, who, much probably to his own dissatisfaction, has been claimed on this score as a Hegelian. "I end with the remark," says Mr. F. H. Bradley,<sup>9</sup> "that it would be entertaining and an irony of fate if the school of experience fell into the cardinal mistake of Hegel. Professor Bain's *Law of Relativity*, approved by J. S. Mill, has at least shown

<sup>8</sup> *Psychology*, Pt. I. c. iii. § 88.    <sup>9</sup> *Principles of Logic*, pp. 148, 149.

a tendency to drift in that direction. 'Our cognition, as it stands, is explained as a mutual negation of the two properties. Each has a positive existence because of the presence of the other as its negative.' I do not suggest that Professor Bain in this ominous utterance really means what he says, but he means quite enough to be on the edge of a precipice. If the school of experience had any knowledge of facts, they would know that the sin of Hegel consists, not at all in defect, but in excess of Relativity. Once say with Professor Bain that 'we know only relations:' once *mean* (what he says) that those relations hold between positives and negatives, and you have accepted the main principle of orthodox Hegelianism."

The safe course is to give each side its due: individual objects are absolutely in themselves, but they are not only absolute; they also enter into real relations of causality and dependence, of likeness and unlikeness. The same things are both absolute and relative; and in a closely interconnected world like ours, where actions and re-actions are so multiplex, where the transformations of energy are so perpetual, attention has of late been so much called to the relative aspects of things, that the absolute have been either overlooked or denied, in spite of the pretty obvious truth, that the relative implies the absolute.

(3) In turning next to the predicament or category *Ubi—Where*, we come across the idea of Space, about which so much mystery has been made, and so much also really must exist. For we ourselves

fully allow the very imperfect knowledge we have on this subject, as is proved by certain puzzling questions that can be proposed, and also by certain mysteries of our faith which bring us to be acquainted with possibilities in Space, at least under preternatural conditions, which we should not have suspected, and which, even when revealed, leave us unable to understand their possibility. What we have to do is to take the natural conditions of body in Space, not the preternatural, and to make such assertions as the evidence of the case justifies. We shall find, as usual, that something is left to agreement about the use of terms, and that not all significations are precisely settled on the ground that there is only one way of looking at things; often there are more ways than one.

Great noise is sometimes raised about the mode in which we come to know *extension*. Strained efforts are made to evolve the conception out of simpler elements of sensation, or else to show<sup>10</sup> such evolution impossible and so to discredit the notion altogether as unreal. But in truth, if, as the facts stand, we have an extended, sensitive body and live in the midst of other extended bodies, and have a mind capable of intelligent reflexion, it does not seem so very extraordinary that we should be convinced of extension as an actual reality. What is the use of raising imaginary difficulties against a clear verdict of experience? especially when the

<sup>10</sup> See the note to James Mill's *Analysis*, Vol. II. pp. 146, seq., where the opinions of Messrs. Bain, Spencer, and John S. Mill are collected together.

difficulties are urged on the strength of convictions, to say the least of it, not a whit better established than the conviction they are intended to upset. When we are solemnly assured, in opposition to the derivation from experience, that the idea of space is not given in the sensation of body, we answer that no *idea* is ever given in any *sensation*, if thereby is meant that the sensation already contains the idea as such. But if we take the right doctrine about the validity of *intellectual* perception of objects that have passed through the medium of *sensitive* cognition, we shall find no reason to distrust our knowledge of space by ordinary experience, and shall be very little disturbed by the assurances of Hamilton and Reid,<sup>11</sup> that extension cannot be analyzed into sensation. We shall listen unmoved to the latter's usual cry of "mystery:" "How the notion of extension comes into the mind is utterly inexplicable. It is true that we have feelings of touch which every moment present extension to the mind; but how they come to do so is the question, for these faculties do no more resemble extension than they resemble justice or courage—nor can the existence of extended things be inferred from those feelings by any rules of reasoning; so that the feelings we have by touch can neither explain how we get the notion nor how we come by the belief of extended things." Of course a feeling by touch contains neither an intellectual conception nor an intellectual belief; but if man has been created a rational Being that acts by sense and intellect, when

<sup>11</sup> *Works*, p. 124.

the sensitive part is touched by an extended body and sensitively perceives it, it is no wonder if the mind is prompted to elicit the idea of extension. This is a more satisfactory account than Reid's favourite device of "natural suggestion," though that phrase might be meant to convey all we mean. Usually, however, "suggestion" is not the word we use for the origination of fresh ideas, but rather we employ it to signify the calling up or the putting together of old ideas by associated conceptions.

Extension has been defined, *Partium extra partes positio*—"The position of parts outside parts," which is not strictly a definition, because it cannot be said to consist of terms simpler than the one to be defined. Even if we leave the word "part" undiscussed, at least "outside" means *spacial* outside-ness, that is, it implies the idea of extension, and is not a simpler element out of which extension is compounded. We may be excused then, if for the sake of clearness, we go straight on with our explanation, and do not stop to consider those perversely ingenious theories, which have for their practical result, either to throw doubt on Space or very much to mystify a notion which, as far as it goes, is simple enough.

Assuming, therefore, that we know extended bodies, we might consider, in the abstract, all the real<sup>12</sup> extension in the material universe; then if we named this *Space*, we should be assigning to the word

<sup>12</sup> *Real* is here used in its sense of actually existing, not in the wider sense in which it is opposed to a strictly logical entity, which can exist only as a term of the mind, "a second intention."

a possible meaning, and not only a possible but an actually received meaning. For Locke says that real Space is the really extended universe, and Cartesians make a similar use of the word. Descartes himself we leave out, because of his unfortunate identification of body with extension; an error from which many of his followers have shaken themselves free. To them we allow the possibility of understanding under the name of *real Space* the actual extension presented by created matter, and under the name of *ideal Space*, the extension that might be presented if more matter were created. On this theory, however, any *vacuum* between parts of the universe would have to be regarded as ideal Space; an exception which Descartes provided against by the assertion of necessary *plenum*, and by saying that two bodies between which no other body intervenes must *eo ipso* be in contact. Against the above view of Space stands the fact that it does not square well with the ordinary usages of speech, according to which things are *in* Space as the contained within the containing. This idea of Space as a container is better preserved by the old Peripatetic school of philosophers, whose view Cartesians ought to regard as at least permissible. What it is will appear if we begin from Aristotle's definition, not of Space, but of place:<sup>13</sup> τὸ τοῦ περιέχοντος πέρας ἀκίνητον πρῶτον—a celebrated phrase which is rendered into Latin, *Corporis ambientis terminus immobilis primus*, or into English, "The superficies of the containing body

<sup>13</sup> *Physics*, Bk. IV. c. vi.



considered as immoveable and immediately contiguous to the body located." In other words, the *place* of a body immersed in water is the immediate watery surface which touches it all round, and which is considered, for convenience, as unchangeable. A fossil immoveably imbedded in a rock, if it were suddenly annihilated would leave a perfect definition of its place; while a body on the very confines of creation for want of a containing superficies, would have no real place on that side by which it was turned towards vacant space. A single body existing alone, if we may make such a supposition, would have no real place at all in the Aristotelian sense. Later writers have added, that it would have no *extrinsic* place, no place marked by an *extrinsic* superficies, but would have an *intrinsic* place, marked by its own superficies. To avoid the inconveniences which come from the perpetual changes of place that are ever going on, all over the known universe, we are obliged to take certain relatively fixed boundaries as equivalently immoveable. Absolute fixity of place is impossible for us; but no serious inconvenience to our calculations happens on that score. If, then, Aristotle's definition cannot be applied with physical nicety, it has a moral applicability which makes it sufficient. Our big ship, the world, sailing on the ocean of ether, does not rock so that we cannot be as if at rest on its surface. We may repeat the doctrine about place in the words of Cardinal Zigliara.<sup>14</sup> "Place is conceived as a bounding object, the outer surface

<sup>14</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. III. c. iv. § 2.

of which shuts in, as it were, the room which the thing located has occupied; and though this outer surface really changes, yet equivalently and in so far as the circumscribed limits are the same, it remains identical. Hence we say that a man standing in a stream abides in the same place, in spite of the constant flow of the water which surrounds him."

Having determined upon a meaning of *place*, we shall easily settle one for *Space*. They are not so much two different notions, as two notions each with the same total content, yet reversing the order in the part of it which is to be emphasized, and the part which is insinuated. *Place* is emphatically the bounding surface, with a reference to the interval, or voluminal distance, included within it; while *Space* is emphatically this interval, or voluminal distance, with a reference to the bounding surface. The place of a man immersed in mid-ocean, and supposed stationary, is the bounding surface of the water with a reference to the room which it encloses and the man fills; his Space is the same room in reference to the surface of water that defines its limits. Space is real, no matter whether it be filled or not with substance, if only the bounding superficies is real: it is imaginary if the bounds are not real but imaginary. Here the schoolmen mean by "real" not all that the word signifies in its wider sense, but what it means in its narrower sense, when it stands for the actually existent. We can give no sense to our words if we take as our absolute Space a purely imaginary extension, without any reference

to the actual; but if we start from the given, actual Space, we can assign a definite sense to imaginary Space. Thus if a man goes in fancy to the confines of creation, he can there imagine an extension reaching out a thousand miles in this or that direction. If, however, he neglects all consideration of given objects in Space, and merely asks himself, where a single atom would be if created alone, he can only say that it is where it is. He has no co-ordinates to which he can refer it; hence he can describe it only on its own account.

The *Ubi* of a body or its *ubication*, is what constitutes it in its place. We must distinguish what *constitutes* the *ubi* from what is its *efficient cause*. Thus the force of a bow may send an arrow into a target and so be the efficient cause of the change from the old place to the new; but it is not the constituent of the new *ubication*, namely, the presence of the thing located to its place, or containing superficies. Space as thus explained is shown to be an idea derivable by abstraction from ordinary experience,<sup>15</sup> and to have the reality which belong to other ideas generalized from concrete individual things. Space, then, is not, as Cousin supposed, itself a universal *a parte rei*; nor is it, as Kant imagined, an *a priori* subjective form of the senses, without any objective validity that we can make certain of; nor is it, as Newton and Clarke contended, one of God's attributes, namely, the

<sup>15</sup> Mr. M'Cosh does not use his ordinary skill in giving a natural derivation to the idea of space. Hence he exaggerates the need we are under of regarding space as infinite.

Divine immensity; nor finally is it, as Gassendi taught, a distinct creation, serving as the recipient of other extended creatures. All these views are sufficiently refuted by a clear statement of the correct view, which carries with it its own evidence. Space thus shows itself to be neither a distinct entity nor a non-entity; neither a purely real nor a purely ideal object; it has the reality proper to a term generalized by abstraction from actual existences. But the generalization must be effected by a genuine power of intelligence; it cannot be done, as our English empirics suppose, by repeated sensations.

Just as an illustration how a slight change of aspect does not affect the truth of doctrine, we may mention that some would not be satisfied with real boundaries as constituting real Space, even when the interval between them is a vacuum. We have taken that view for its convenience. Cardinal Zigliara requires the interval to be occupied with body. "Real Space," he says,<sup>16</sup> "is real extension, and hence body really extended between two other bodies, or between two parts of the same body." Without attacking the possibility of this definition, we have preferred another, which insists on the reality of the bounding surface only, while it allows the contained volume to be either a plenum or a vacuum, as long as its size remains the same in both cases.

(4) It is usual to introduce the subject of Time with a quotation from St. Augustine: "What is

<sup>16</sup> *Ontologia*, Lib. III. c. iv. art. iii.

Time? If no one asks me I know, but if some one asks me, and I try to explain, then I don't know." Nevertheless, we must try to frame an answer to the question, after the same manner in which we proceeded in regard to Space. But at once we must notice a difference. Space is made up of co-existent parts, Time is continuous succession, and as it is always on the move, it has no actual parts in extension. Some have devised the word *pro-tension* for it; but this does not help much, except as a reminder to beware of differences.

In order to show the reality of Time, and to confute such opinions as we find in Kant, that Time is an *a priori* form of internal sensibility, the best way is to take the elements whence we derive the notion. If occasionally instead of rigorously defining terms by terms still more simple, we are able only to substitute synonyms one for another, the elementary character of the notions with which we are dealing is the satisfactory account of the proceeding. To begin with, we are evidently on real ground when we say that things have duration, which is described as "the perseverance of an object in existence." On the strength of another treatise, we are justified in asserting an external world; we are equally justified in asserting that its objects actually and in themselves *endure*. Duration, however, may be of two kinds: an object may endure without any intrinsic change whatever, and such is the eternity of God: it is existence all together and perfect; or an object may endure with intrinsic change, with a movement of succession

within itself. There is manifestly such a succession in some of the accidents of a substance ; also in those changes which the schoolmen call substantial, and attribute to "the generation and corruption of substantial forms." There is succession here, though the transformation itself is supposed to be instantaneous, not a continuous movement. Next it is asked whether this duration has a reality. Some reality it undoubtedly has because it is embodied in concrete facts. But is it a reality distinct from the thing which endures? In God certainly not. But what about creatures? They might absolutely have existed not when they do, but at far distant times ; they might have a longer or a shorter duration. Furthermore, their duration depends on the continuance of God's conserving power, for no finite object, by its sole creation, is endowed with the attribute of independent duration. Thus, though the duration of creatures be not a distinct entity apart, added on to things, it is not *completely* identified with their substance.

Some straightway affirm that Time is successive duration in creatures : it is the movement of objects in the course of the world ; or, as Locke says, it is especially the movement of human thoughts one after another.<sup>17</sup> As, however, we had to point out, that whatever be the possibility of understanding by Space the actually extended universe of matter, it does not answer to ordinary modes of speech about Space, so we have again to call attention to

<sup>17</sup> Bk. II. c. xiv.

the fact, that whatever be the possibility of calling Time the successions in the course of created existences, this is not exactly the common acceptance of the word. For commonly Time is considered as a continuous flow without interruption: Time stops for no man; Time is neither quick nor slow, but always uniform. Whereas movements take place in Time, they do not simply constitute Time, they are interrupted, and of variable velocity. These are familiar expressions, and they do not fit in with the view just mentioned, which is often called the Cartesian, though Descartes himself inclines to call time a *modus cogitandi*, a way of thinking about things as having duration, which way of thinking is unchanged, whether the duration be successive or not.<sup>18</sup> It is much disputed what sort of succession, or whether any succession, is presented by angelic substance in its continued existence:<sup>19</sup> but apart from such disputable matters many objects certainly present us no evenly continuous motion such as would suffice for Time. Hence we take the movements of the heavenly bodies as affording us the most even and uninterrupted movement we can find, and from them we get our measure of Time. If according to this explanation there is no real entity which is simply and formally Time, yet Time is clearly founded in reality; it has a reality in the real motion of things, and is not a mere Kantian form of inner experience.

<sup>18</sup> *De Princip. Philosoph.* Pt. I. §§ 15—18.

<sup>19</sup> See the pamphlet, *Die Philosophische Lehre von Zeit und Raum.* Von Dr. Schneid.

We will repeat our explanation for the sake of clearness. Time, like Space, is neither a simple reality nor a simple fiction of the mind ; it is an idea founded in reality, but not exactly answering to it. Space, we said, does not exist as such ; but there do exist extended bodies marking out definite volumes ; the volume marked out by the bounds of the actual universe is called real Space, and imaginary Space may be extended beyond this unlimitedly. If the whole universe is moving off in some direction, then even real Space is not a fixture, but we have no other real term against which to measure its direction. Time is very much the same kind of notion, but with peculiarities of its own. For Time especially we must assume the validity of memory, which being granted, we become certain that real changes go on in the world. Not every change involves Time, for in place of one body God might instantaneously substitute another ; but change in the stricter sense takes place within the same substance, so that the two successive states are the contradictory one of another. Here it is that the opinion of Balmez is of some use. He traces the notion of Time to the principle of contradiction : "A thing cannot both be and not be simultaneously." If he merely fastens on the adverb "simultaneously," that of course contains the idea of time ; but if he fastens on the contrast of being and not being, then undoubtedly there is in successive change such a contrast. That a thing should be in its altered state at the same time that it is unaltered is a contradiction. Nevertheless, we



cannot in this way pretend to have simplified Time. We must trust to the power of memory for giving us a *before* and an *after* as marked by some change. Thus we come to know that things really endure amid changes. Next we can find out a real process of change, such that, being itself sufficiently regular, it will serve to measure those other changes which are irregular. So far we are dealing with realities. The things are real, the changes are real, the regularities and irregularities of change are real; but we have not exactly come across Time as the abstract, which is "successive duration," apart from all concrete objects, and from all reference to rate of succession or to possible interruption. We can, however, so prescind from all such circumstances as to put before ourselves the idea of a point regarded as moving not simply in Space, but in successive Duration; an indivisible *now* ever leaving the past behind it and invading the future, yet never itself actually either past or future. There is no actual thing which is this point; the actualities are all objects liable to changes in more or less irregular succession. Ideally we fix upon an even flow of duration, and we call this Time. Time is not a thing, but it marks a real fact in the successions of things.<sup>20</sup> In reference to things it is idealized, as is geometry. The definition which Aristotle<sup>21</sup> gives of Time may now be brought forward with some *good* prospect of being easily understood. "Time

<sup>20</sup> See Dr. Schneid's pamphlet, *Die Philosophische Lehre von Zeit und Raum*.

<sup>21</sup> *Physic*, Lib. IV. c. xi.

is the number of movement, estimated according to its *before* and its *after*”—ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον. Some refer the *before* and the *after* to Space and not to Duration, lest they should seem to be guilty of the fallacy of *idem per idem*; but we cannot thus derive temporal from local succession. There may be temporal without local succession, as in the flow of thought, and mere place will never give Time. Aristotle says that then we reach the notion of Time, when we reduce to number a succession which is marked by the characters of prior and of subsequent in point of duration. St. Thomas gives a paraphrase of Aristotle's words:<sup>22</sup> “It is clear that we affirm Time to be when in a movement we can fix upon a *this term* and a *that term*, with an interval between the two. For when we consider both extremes of an interval, and when the mind perceives two *nows*, one antecedent, the other subsequent, and counts the *before* and the *after* in the movement, then we have *Time*. . . . Time is nothing else but the number of movement, estimated as *before* and *after*, for we perceive time when we number *before* and *after* in movement. It is evident, then, that Time is not movement, but is consequent upon movement, when this is expressed by number.” It is no fault of the Aristotelian definition that it cannot define terms already simple by still simpler; so that if “before” and “after,” which enter into the account of Time, already suppose the notion which they are meant to explain, this cannot be helped.

<sup>22</sup> In Lib. IV. *Physic*, Lect. xvii.

Whether Time is said to have real parts or not, is a matter that depends largely on how we look at the question. As the past is past and the future is yet future, neither of them is actual; but in so far as the past actually has been traversed whereas the future has yet to be traversed, the former has a sort of advantage. It is common, however, to say that only the present is actual; but because the present is a point with no duration, we seem to be thrown across the awkward result that the only actuality in time is very like nothing. But we need not be distressed, for we are already acquainted with the degree of reality that is needful for an idea abstracted from individual conditions. We have a choice between supposing as many different *nows* as we mark different instants in a long duration, or with St. Thomas,<sup>23</sup> we may regard *now* "as substantially the same throughout the duration," and still say with the same authority<sup>24</sup> that "Time has no entity except according to the indivisible now." We may compare the course of time to the tracing out of a line by a point travelling in Space. The line indeed so traced has all its parts actually co-existent at the end of the operation, whereas Time has no such co-existence. The comparison, however, consists in this: to each point of Space in the line there corresponds a point in the duration of Time; and if we do not say that each point of Space was traversed *during* its corresponding

<sup>23</sup> In Lib. I. *Sent.* D. xix. q. ii. a. ii.

<sup>24</sup> In Lib. IV. *Phys. Lect.* xxiii.

point of Time, the obstacle lies in the word *during*.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless the points in both orders are really assignable limits; they are not distinct entities, constituting a part of the extension, yet they answer to real truths in the order of Space and Time. The conclusion is, that the indivisibility of a point of Time no more tells against the reality of Time than the indivisibility of the point of Space tells against the reality of Space; and if Time has not co-existent parts as Space has, yet it has parts in the only way possible to a continuous succession. Its parts are not finite periods of rest, but finite measures of the ever-moving duration, such as the minutes and hours marked by the ceaseless rotation of the earth. Thus no measurable part is ever strictly an actuality; but this does not detract from such reality as we attribute to Time, for our doctrine has been that there is no distinct entity called Time, as there is no distinct entity called Space; and that nevertheless both have real foundations, one in the succession of events, and the other in the extension of bodies. It must have been clear that half the perplexities which beset the question of Time, come from a want of a proper conception of continuous motion; which, being a *continuum* and a movement, cannot be treated as though it were made up of discrete parts at rest. Aristotle allows that movement is strictly undefinable—an *ἀόριστον*.<sup>26</sup> He has,

<sup>25</sup> A scholiast calls the instant, οὐ χρόνος ἀλλὰ ἄτομον τοῦ χρόνου. Kant argues that "points and moments are only limits."

<sup>26</sup> *Physic.* Lib. III. c. ii. Laplace says that movement is the strangest and most inexplicable phenomenon.

however, attempted such a *quasi* definition as the case admits of, and thereby, until it is discovered on what principle he was proceeding, he may seem to have justified the oft-made charge, that he has wrapped up a very clear idea in very dark language. He was unwilling to speak of motion as a transfer, or to call it by any other name which was simply synonymous with itself; but he thought that if he could express it in terms of *act* and *potency*, he would be using ideas that run through all the categories, divide all Being, and are most fundamental as conceptions. So he defined motion in terms of potency and act, and described it as uniting these two in a very peculiar manner. Motion is in act so far as it is actually started, and no longer exists simply as potential in the cause that was to produce it; but it is in potency inasmuch as it has not yet reached its term and effected its final purpose, that is, its relatively final purpose, for the transmutation effected may rapidly give place to another. Full of these ideas, Aristotle wrote what sounds so strange to some ears, which we need not straightway call "long ears," but at least we may ask that they be willing to open themselves patiently to words that are far from being wholly foolish: "Motion is the act of that which is potential, inasmuch as it is potential"—ἡ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ἐντελέχεια, ἢ τοιοῦτον.<sup>27</sup>

Aristotle was wrong on one point because he did not know the truth of creation; he asserted the

<sup>27</sup> *Physic.* Lib. III. c. i. See *Die Aristotelische Lehre über Begriff und Ursache der ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ*. Von Matheas Kappes, pp. 9—14.

eternity of motion as an evident truth—*δηλον ὅς ἐστιν αἰδιος κίνησις*. The possibility of such a thing is disputed; but leaving this discussion alone, we may turn our attention to the confusion that frequently arises from trying to translate eternity into terms of time. God's motionless eternity is the only actual eternity; we can assert it to be equivalent, and more, to indefinitely prolonged time, but we cannot even approach to a measurement of it by this means. When we say that God knows the future because it is present to Him, as all the circumference is present to the centre of a circle, we must beware lest we pass beyond the warrant which we have for such an expression. There is some truth in it, but it is not true if it is understood to mean that God does not recognize the reality of the succession in events. If it is correct to affirm that the future is present to God, it is also correct to affirm that the future is future to God—that He knows it to be future, and will not at this moment justify a sinner who is going to repent forty years hence. It would be a marvellous novelty of doctrine in the Catholic Church to allow a man to go to Communion at Christmas on the strength of a good Confession he was to make at the Easter following, the theory being that all time is present to God. Futurity is a fact which God recognizes.

Our labours to explain Time and Space have once more enforced the lessons so often put before us in the course of this treatise; that we can fix upon a definite meaning for our most generalized and ultimate ideas, and need not call them, with

Mr. Spencer, confused states of consciousness, unfit for the name of knowledge; that we can make sure of their real validity in the region of things; that nevertheless our knowledge is very far from exhaustive, and can be asserted only under its limitations. What mysteries gather round Time and Space, especially in their preternatural manifestations! What greater mysteries round God's Eternity and Immensity! and again, What mysteries in the relations of the first order, which is created, to the second which is uncreated! Yet of each we know something certain, and of their interrelations we also know something certain. General Metaphysics thus proves to be a human science, and has been treated as such throughout these pages—neither as more nor as less. We have not claimed further insight into truths than that human insight which is manifestly our prerogative as intelligent creatures. But this we have claimed, and boldly claimed, against many whose philosophy consists in little except a plea for denying what we have been affirming. Positive in name, these writers are negative in fact; while we forego the name of positivists, but do in fact hold Metaphysics to be positive—a positive science.

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Systems of Psychology characteristically distinguish themselves by the way in which they deal with the knowledge of relations; and the system to which the late Professor Green was attached, is shown by the following remarks in his Introduction to *Hume's Works*, § 40: "In making the general idea of substance precede the particular ideas of sorts of substances, Locke stumbled upon a truth which he was not aware of, and which will not fit into his ordinary doctrine of general ideas: the truth that knowledge is a process from the more abstract to the more concrete, not the reverse. Throughout Locke's prolix discussion of 'substance' and 'essence' we find two opposite notions perpetually cross each other; one that knowledge begins with the simple idea, the other that it begins with the real thing as particularized by manifold relations. According to the former notion, simple ideas being given, void of relation, as the real, the mind of its own act proceeds to bring them into relation and compound them; according to the latter, a thing of various properties (*i.e.*, relations) being given as the real, the mind proceeds to separate these from each other. According to the one notion, the intellectual process, as one of complication, ends just where, according to the other notion, as one of abstraction, it began." Many of the schoolmen have propounded a doctrine that the simpler and therefore the more generalized ideas are formed first, and that particularizations follow gradually afterwards; but as they would wholly repudiate the mere subjective forms of Kant, and all innate ideas, so they would reject Green's ideas borrowed from "a universal consciousness," and giving relationship and order to the data of the several experiences, which are themselves a mere



unordered multitude. A further result of Green's<sup>1</sup> system, opposed to all the results of our last chapter, is briefly given in a later passage of the same work, but a fuller explanation must be sought in the *Prolegomena Ethica*. Noting that Locke supposes "the co-existence of real elements over a certain duration," and attributing this to imperfect analysis, the author says: "To a more thorough analysis there is no alternative between finding reality in *relations of thought*, which, because relations of thought, are not in time, and therefore immutable, and submitting it to such subdivision of time as *excludes all real co-existence*, because what is real or present at one moment, is unreal or present at the next."

The point in this system to which we call special attention, is the reduction of all reality to "relations," which relations are not things in themselves, but are "constituted by the self-distinguishing consciousness. We attach no meaning to reality as applied to the world of phenomena, but that of existence under definite and unalterable relations, which can subsist only for a thinking consciousness." Thus is opened out a whole field of curious speculation which must have puzzled the Oxford students of a recent period, and which still holds sway in our seats of learning.

(2) The same University had previously been puzzled by Mansel's doctrine about the relative and the absolute; and the pith of his theory may be gathered from the following paragraph:<sup>2</sup> "Hamilton, like Kant, maintained that all our cognitions are compounded of two elements, one contributed by the object known, the other by the mind knowing. But the very conception of a relation implies the existence of things to be related; and the knowledge of an object, as in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 98.    <sup>2</sup> Mansel's *Philosophy of the Conditioned*, pp. 69, 70.

relation to our mind, necessarily implies its existence out of that relation. How far it resembles, and how far it does not resemble, the object apprehended by us, we cannot say, for we have no means of comparing the two together. Instead, therefore, of saying with Kant, that the reason is subject to inevitable delusion, by which it mistakes the regulative principles of its own thoughts for the representations of real things, Hamilton would say that the reason, while compelled to believe in the existence of these real things, is not legitimately entitled to make any positive representation of them as of such and such a nature; and that the contradictions into which it falls when attempting to do so, are due to an illegitimate attempt to transcend the proper boundaries of positive thought." Hegelians regard this as cowardly on the part of Kant and of Hamilton; they prefer to maintain that the contradictions of thought are also the contradictions of things, and that the whole life of the universe rests on a movement of contradiction and reconciliation.

(3) M. Charles, in his *Eléments de Philosophie*, Vol. I. p. 239, suggests that though the "primary qualities" of body, or those founded on *extension*, are necessary to body *as conceived by us*, they may not be absolutely necessary. As regards bodies existing in some preternatural condition, we know that the character of extension in space may be dispensed with; but the fact does not at all invalidate the reality of extension in nature. A thing does not cease to be real, because it may be made to give place to some other condition of existence; even annihilation hanging over the material universe as its destiny, would not negative its present reality. Still less do preternatural conditions of extended objects in the concrete, take off from the absolute truth of mathematics, concerning extension in the abstract.



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